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# MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING,

WRITTEN BY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

*THE QUARTO EDITION,*

1600.

A FACSIMILE

BY

CHARLES PRAETORIUS.

WITH INTRODUCTION

BY

PETER AUGUSTIN DANIEL.



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## 40 SHAKSPERE QUARTO FACSIMILES,

WITH INTRODUCTIONS, LINE-NUMBERS, &C, BY SHAKSPERE SCHOLARS,  
ISSUED UNDER THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF DR F. J. FURNIVALL.

### 1. *Those by W. Griggs.*

No.	No.
1. Hamlet. 1603.	8. Henry IV. 1st Part. 1598.
2. Hamlet. 1604.	9. Henry IV. 2nd Part. 1600.
3. Midsummer Night's Dream. 1599. (Fisher.)	10. Passionate Pilgrim. 1599.
4. Midsummer Night's Dream. 1600. (Roberts.)	11. Richard III. 1597.
5. Loves Labor's Lost. 1598.	12. Venus and Adonis. 1593.
6. Merry Wives. 1602.	13. Troilus and Cressida. 1609.
7. Merchant of Venice. 1600. (Roberts.)	

### 2. *Those by C. Praetorius.*

14. Much Ado About Nothing. 1609.	26. Romeo and Juliet. 1599.
15. Taming of a Shrew. 1594.	27. Henry V. 1600.
16. Merchant of Venice. 1600. (I. R. for Thomas Heyes.)	28. Henry V. 1608.
17. Richard II. 1597. Duke of Devonshire's copy. (on stone.)	29. Titus Andronicus. 1600.
18. Richard II. 1597. Mr Huth. (fotograf.)	30. Sonnets and Lover's Complaint. 1509.
19. Richard II. 1603. Brit. Mus. (fotograf.)	31. Othello. 1622.
20. Richard II. 1634. (fotograf.)	32. Othello. 1630.
21. Pericles. 1609. Q1.	33. King Lear. 1608. Q1. (N. Butter, <i>Pile Bull</i> .)
22. Pericles. 1609. Q2.	34. King Lear. 1608. Q2. (N. Butter.)
23. The Whole Contention. 1619. Part I. (for 2 Henry VI.)	35. Lucrece. 1594.
24. The Whole Contention. 1619. Part II. (for 3 Henry VI.)	36. Romeo and Juliet. Undated. (fotograf.)
25. Romeo and Juliet. 1597.	37. Contention. 1594. (not yet done.)
	38. True Tragedy. 1595. (not yet done.)
	39. The Famous Victories. 1598. (not yet done.)
	40. The Troublesome Raigne. 1591. (For King John: not yet done)

[Shakspeare-Quarto Facsimiles, No. 14.]



## INTRODUCTION.

UNDER date 4th August, presumably in the year 1600, there is an entry in the Stationers' Register to the effect that *Much Ado about Nothing* and other plays, *As You Like It*, *Henry V.* and *Every Man in his Humour*, were "to be staied."

The reason for this stay or injunction is not known; but shortly after, on the 23rd August 1600, we find *Much Ado* and the second part of *Henry IV.* entered for Andrew Wyse and William Aspley, and both plays were printed for them, in this same year, by V. S. [Valentine Sims].

As regards the Publishers of these two Plays, I do not find in the British Museum Catalogue of Early English Books that Wise and Aspley had ever any other partnership relations. Wise appears to have been in business from 1594 to 1602. During the years 1597-1599 he published the first two Qo. editions of each of the three plays, *Richard II.*, *Richard III.* and *1st Pt. of Henry IV.*, and, in 1602, a third edition of *Richard III.* On the 25th Jan. 1603 he transferred his right in all three to Matthew Law, by whom nine subsequent editions (2 of *Richard II.*; 3 of *Richard III.*, and 4 of *Henry IV. Pt. 1.*) were published prior to their appearance in the first Folio. In view of these numerous publications it is a singular but unexplained fact that no second quarto editions of two such popular plays as *Much Ado* and 2 *Henry IV.* should have been issued.

Aspley is shown by the Catalogue above-mentioned to have been in business from 1599 to 1630; his name appears on the title-page of some copies of the *Sonnets*, 1609, as the bookseller, and in 1623 he was one of the four booksellers at whose charges the first Fo. ed. of Shakespeare's Plays was printed (see Colophon of that vol.). The two plays with which he was specially connected made their appearance in that volume under very different circumstances; for while, as we shall see, *Much Ado* was little more than a reprint of the Qo., it is very doubtful whether the Qo. ed. of 2 *Henry IV.* was used at all as copy for the Fo. version. Mr H. A. Evans does indeed, in his Introduction (p. viii) to the Facsimile of that Qo., point out some instances of what appears to be reproduction of Qo. blunders, and a few other seeming points of contact might be adduced; but on the whole I incline to agree with the Cambridge

editors that the printers of the Fo. had only MS. copy for 2 *Henry IV.*

The entries in the Stationers' Register of course determine the latest date that can be assigned to *Much Ado*. How much earlier it was produced is uncertain. Meres does not mention it in the list of twelve plays which he gives in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598, and although this of course is no proof that it was not then in existence, Meres has shown himself to be so well informed with regard to the literature of the day, published and unpublished, that the absence from his list of so popular a play as this must at once have become, has been accepted by nearly all editors as a main argument for fixing the date of its production at some time in 1599, 1600.

Another point to be considered in regard to date is Will Kemp's connection with the play: from the prefixes to the speeches in Act IV. sc. ii., we learn that he took the part of Dogberry and was no doubt its first personator, or "creator," according to modern theatrical parlance, and did we know the exact time at which he withdrew from the Chamberlain's Company we might possibly be able to determine the date to be assigned to the play more precisely than by the entries in the Stationers' Register we now can do. That he was a member of the Company in 1598 we have the testimony of Ben Jonson, who includes his name in the list of Chamberlain's men who acted in *Every Man in his Humour* in that year; Jonson does not mention him in a similar list of the actors of *Every Man out of his Humour*, performed by the same Company in 1599; but we cannot therefore conclude that Kemp had then quitted that company; Kemp and Shakespeare, in fact, are in exactly the same position as regards these two plays: both performed in the first, neither in the second; and we know of course that Shakespeare had not parted company with the Chamberlain's men. From this mention of him in 1598 till his name appears in Henslowe's Diary, 10 March, 1602, we know nothing of Kemp's career, with the exception of the fact that in the Lent of 1599 he danced his famous Morris between London and Norwich; but as this was during the theatrical vacation it would not have interfered with his duties in the company. The account of this Morris, which he published the next year as his *Nine daies wonder*, was entered in the Stationers' Register, 22 April, 1600.

The appearance then of Kemp's name in the play, as the original personator of Dogberry, is in no way inconsistent with the generally received opinion that *Much Ado* was produced at some time between the date of Meres's book and the entries of the play in the Stationers' Register.

I have said above that Meres makes no mention of our play;

but included in his list of twelve he gives us the title of a play called *Love labours wonne*, and Mr A. E. Brae in his pamphlet entitled *Collier, Coleridge and Shakespeare*, 1860, endeavours to prove that this is merely another title for *Much Ado about Nothing*. This identification if established would necessarily throw back the date of our play to some time not later than the beginning of 1598; but I own, ingenious as Mr Brae's arguments certainly are, they fail to carry conviction to my mind. *Much Ado* is not the only play which is supposed to be referred to under the title of *Love labours wonne*: Dr. Farmer in his *Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare* (see Vol. I. p. 314, *Var.* 1821), suggested *All's Well that Ends Well* as probably the supposed lost play; the Rev. Joseph Hunter in his *Disquisition on The Tempest*, 1841, and again in his *New Illustrations*, 1845, Vol. I. pp. 130 and 359, argued in favour of *The Tempest*; Prof. G. L. Craik, in his *English of Shakespeare*, 1st ed. 1857, p. 7, advocated the claims of the *Taming of the Shrew*, and after carefully considering all these claims I see no reason why *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* should not also enter into the competition; though possibly it will be thought that a title which can be made to fit so many different plays probably belongs to none of them.

At any rate it does not seem to me that the claim of *Much Ado* to this title is sufficiently established to allow of its intervention on the question of the date of that play.

A matter presenting less scope for ingenious speculation, but one of very much greater importance, is that of the relationship of the Qo. and Fo. versions; 'till this is ascertained, and their relative authority determined, no satisfactory settlement of the text is possible.

As regards *Much Ado* the question presents no great difficulties, and it may be stated briefly and with confidence that in 1623 the only authority Messrs. Heminge and Condell had for their Folio edition was a copy of the quarto containing a few MS. alterations and corrections made probably years before, and not specially for this purpose. By far the greater number of the variations of the Fo. must, however, be attributed to carelessness on the part of its printer, not to MS. alterations made by the corrector of the Qo.; indeed the fewness and small importance of those which can be attributed to deliberate alteration and correction forbid the notion that any independent MS. of the Play could have been consulted for the purpose, or that any sustained effort was made to supply the deficiencies of the Qo. and correct its errors.

In the Fo. we find the Play divided into Acts, and Sc. i. of the first Act marked; but no further attempt to number the scenes was made. The Fo., or rather the "corrected" Qo. from which it was printed, must also be credited with the marking of four or five

more *exits* than appear in the Qo.; but, as regards the stage directions and distribution of speeches generally, both editions are almost equally deficient and faulty. The only variations worth notice in this respect are:—

Act II. sc. i. l. 88. The Qo. has *Enter prince, Pedro, Claudio, and Beneaicke, and Balthaser, or dumb Iohn.* To this muddle the Fo., without correcting it, adds *Maskers with a drum.* In the same scene, l. 160, the Qo. has *Dance exeunt*, which the Fo. changes to *Excunt.* *Musicke for the dance.*

In the same scene, l. 217, the Qo. has *Enter the Prince, Hero, Leonato, Iohn and Borachio, and Conrade.* The Fo. rightly omits all after *Prince*, and at l. 270 where the Qo. has *Enter Claudio and Beatrice*, the Fo. rightly adds *Hero, Leonato.*

Act II. sc. iii. at line 38 the Qo. has *Enter prince, Leonato, Claudio, Musicke*, and at line 44 *Enter Balthaser with musicke.* For these two stage directions the Fo. only has, at l. 38, *Enter Prince, Leonato, Claudio, and Iacke Wilson.*<sup>1</sup>

Act II. sc. iii. 195. A speech given to *Claudio* in Qo. is assigned to *Leonato* in Fo.; either may be right.

Act III. sc. i. in the first entrance, the Fo. corrupts Hero's *Gentlewomen to Gentlemen.*

Act III. sc. ii. l. 54. A speech wrongly assigned to *Bened'ck* in the Qo. is<sup>2</sup> in the Fo. given to *Prince*; though it might equally well have been given to *Leonato.*

Act V. sc. i. l. 209. The Fo. for *Enter Constables* has *Enter Constable*; and at l. 267 where the Qo. has *Enter Leonato, his brother and the Sexton*, the Fo. wrongly omits all after *Leonato.*

Act V. sc. iv. l. 33, at the entry of the Prince and Claudio, the Fo. changes *and two or three other* to *with attendants.*

In other places the Fo. reproduces the stage directions just as they appear in the Qo.; Innogen, wife of Leonato, a character not

<sup>1</sup> Mr Collier supposed that "Iacke Wilson" might be identical with a "John Wilson, son of Nicholas Wilson, minstrel," a record of whose birth, 24th April, 1585, he had discovered in the registers of St. Giles Cripplegate; he thought too that this might be the same individual as the "Mr Wilson, the singer," who dined with Alleyn, the actor, on the anniversary of his wedding, 22 Oct. 1620, and that he was not only a singer, but a composer of Shaksperian music. (See his *Memoirs of Alleyn*, Sh. Soc. 1841, p. 153.—*Sh. Soc. Papers*, 1845, Vol. II. p. 33, and Introduction to *Memoirs of Actors*, Sh. Soc. 1846, p. xvii.) This last piece of information Mr Collier would seem to have derived in an imperfect manner from Dr E. F. Rimbault, who in 1846, in a pamphlet entitled *Who was Jack Wilson?* sought, with some degree of probability, to identify him with John Wilson, Dr and Prof. of Music at Oxford, who was born 1594 and died 1673.

It is evident from the birth dates of these two individuals that neither of them could be the original personator of Balthasar; but either might, for anything we know to the contrary, have taken the part at some revival of the play. Hence the insertion of the name in the theatrical copy of the Qo.

in the Play at all, is reproduced in the Fo. as in the Qo. in the entrances to Act I. sc. i., and Act II. sc. i.; in Act I. sc. i. l. 205, the Fo. follows the Qo. in making "John the bastard" enter with Don Pedro, though he has nothing whatever to do with this part of the scene; the cousins or attendants whom Leonato addresses at the end of Act I. sc. ii, are no more provided in the stage directions of the Fo. than of the Qo.; in Act II. sc. i. ll. 104, 107, 109, three speeches belonging to Balthasar remain in the Fo. as in the Qo. to Benedick; no correction appears in the Fo. of the jumble by which in III. iii. l. 187 Conrade is made to speak both his own and the watchman's speeches; the confusion of prefixes to the speeches in Act IV. sc. ii.—where Kemp's and Cowley's names are given instead of those of the characters they represented—is the same in the Fo. as in the Qo., with the exception that the prefix to the mangled speeches, ll. 70, 71, which the Qo. gives to *Couley* is changed in the Fo. to *Sex.* i. e. the Sexton, who has already left the stage; in Act V. sc. iii., in both Qo. and Fo., Claudio's speech ll. 22, 23 is given to *Lo.* [*Lord*] and printed as prose; and in Act V. sc. v. l. 98, the Fo., as the Qo., gives to Leonato the privilege which belongs to Benedick, of stopping Beatrice's sweet mouth.

In the text itself we find in the Fo. the same persistence in the errors and peculiarities of the Qo. The following instances—the number of which might be largely increased—will, added to those already displayed in connection with the stage-directions, suffice to establish the dependence of the Fo. on the Qo. :—

I. i. 1 and 10. In both places Don *Pedro* called *Peter*.

I. i. 59—

"But for the *stuffing well*, we are all mortall."—*stuffing* and *well* wrongly connected.

I. i. 89. *Benedick* called *Benedict*.

III. ii. 28—

"Well euery one cannot master a grieffe, but he that has it."

III. ii. 118—

"If you loue her, then to-morrow wed her."—Comma should come after *then*.

III. iii. 11. *George* Sea-cole. In Act III. sc. v. he becomes *Francis*.

III. iii. 158—

"how the Prince Claudio and my master planted, and placed, and possessed by my master Don Iohn."—Evidently corrupt; should probably read—"how the Prince and Claudio planted and placed and possessed by my master Don Iohn."

III. v. 10—

"Speakes a little *of* the matter."—*of* for *off*.

IV. i. 57—

“Out on thee seeming,” etc.

IV. i. 103—

“About *thy* thoughts and counsailes of thy heart.”—*thy* for *the*.

IV. i. 145-147. Benedick's speech. “Sir, sir, . . . what to say.”—Printed as prose.

IV. i. 157-160. Commencement of Friar's speech. “Heare me . . . I have markt.”—Printed as prose.<sup>1</sup>

IV. i. 204—

“Your daughter heere *the Princesse (left for dead)*”—should be—*the princes left for dead*.

V. ii. 47—

“let me goe with that I *came*”—should be *came for*.

It was perhaps scarcely worth while to take into account obvious blunders peculiar to the Fo., but, as showing the general inferiority of its text, the following instances may be noted:—

I. i. 51. *ease* for *eate*; I. iii. 41. *I will make* for *I make*; II. i.

<sup>1</sup> On this instance the Cambridge Editors remark—“The commencement of the Friar's speech comes at the bottom of page, sig. G. i. (r) of the Quarto. The type appears to have been accidentally dislocated, and the passage was then set up as prose.” The Editors further suppose that “some words were probably lost in the operation,” and they accordingly mark a *lucuna* in their *Globe* edition. A theory of a bit of “pie” resulting in corruption of the text demands very careful consideration. I do not perceive that any words are wanting for the sense, and my examination of the page (49 of our Facsimile) inclines me to believe that there was nothing accidental in the printing of a portion of it as prose. The page, it will be observed, is abnormally long, and consists of 39 lines; whereas the regular full page, including line for signature and catch-word, has 38 only: but if this page had been printed metrically throughout it would have required 42 lines; of which three would have been occupied by Benedick's speech, ll. 145-7, and four by the commencement of the Friar's speech. Now it is not to be supposed that the whole play was set up by one man, and it is therefore allowable to imagine that the portion assigned to—let us say—Compositor A. may have ended with the last line of this page: the following portion, given out to Compositor B., may have been made up into pages before A. had finished his stint. Were B.'s pages to be pulled to pieces to make room for the fag end of A.'s work? I imagine not: it was less trouble to compress a few lines of verse into prose and, with the help of an extra line, to get all A.'s work into his last page, as we now see it in p. 49 of our Facsimile. Probably to a somewhat similar transaction in the printing office was due the appearance in prose of the first part of Mercutio's famous *Queen Mab* speech in *Romeo and Juliet*. See p. 19 of the Facsimile of Q2 of that play, edited by Mr H. A. Evans.

It is worth noting here that this p. 49 of *Much Ado* has received some slight corrections in its passage through the press: in l. 125, “Do not lue Hero, do not ope thine eies:”, the British Museum copy, C. 12. g. 29, has a comma in lieu of a colon at the end of the line; in line 149, “Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?”, the same copy has no comma after *Lady* and has a full stop in place of the note of interrogation at the end of the line; the last words also of the page, “haue markt,” do not in this copy range with the line above, but are the breadth of one letter within the line.

100. *Loue for Ioue*; II. i. 284. *this Lady tongue for my Ladie Tongue*; II. i. 305. something of *a iealous complexion, a for that*; II. i. 328. he is in *my heart, my for her*; II. ii. 34. *on for Don*; III. i. 79. It were a better death, *to die with mockes, to for then*; IV. i. 128. *reward for reeward*; V. i. 6. *comfort for comforter*; V. ii. 33. *name for names*; V. ii. 38, 39. *time (twice) for rime*.

The chief sins however of the Fo. in this respect are sins of omission; besides numerous single words, the omission of which may be unhesitatingly ascribed to carelessness on the part of the printer, the Fo. omits some eight or nine lines, here noted; the omitted passages being printed in Italic:—

I. i. 311, 312—

“And I will breake with hir, *and with her father,*  
*And thou shalt haue her:* wast not to this end,” etc.

A common error of the press: the eye of the compositor glancing to the *her* in the second line, he overlooked the words between. See similar instances noted at the end of Dr Furnivall's *Forewords* to the Q2 *Hamlet* Facsimile.

III. ii. 33-37—

“as to be a Dutch-man to day, a French-man to morrow, *or in the shape of two countries at once, as a Germaine from the waste downwards, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip vpward, no dublet.*”

Malone suggested that this passage may have been struck out “to avoid giving any offence to the Spaniards, with whom James became a friend in 1604.”

IV. i. 20—

“What men daily do, *not knowing what they do.*”

Here, as in the first instance, the compositor having set up the first *do*, supposed he had arrived at the second.

IV. ii. 18-23—

Kemp [Dogberry] loq. . . . “maisters, do you serue God?

*Both.* Yea sir we hope.

*Kem.* Write down, that they hope they serue God: and write God first, for God defend but God should goe before such villaines: maisters it is proued,” etc.

Blackstone supposes that this omission “may be accounted for from the stat. 3 Jac. I. c. 21.”

V. iv. 33—

“Here comes the Prince and Claudio.”

I have given Malone's and Blackstone's reasons for the omission of two of these passages; but I apprehend they may all be set down to accident.

In reviewing then the errors of the Fo., enough, I think, has been said to prove beyond dispute its connection with the Qo. : it now remains to consider whether that connection has been in any way affected by the supervising authority of a MS. copy of the play, as has been shown to be the case with some other plays where the Qo. editions have been made use of in providing "copy" for the printers of the Fo.

I have already expressed my conviction that no such MS. copy was consulted for the Fo. edition of *Much Ado*; but in order that the reader may have before him all the evidence on which such an opinion could be founded, I have made out a list of all the corrections and variations of the Fo. that have been received into modern texts, Mr. Knight's especially; for he more than any other editor has taken the Fo. for his guide. When he rejects its authority in favour of the Qo. the Fo. reading must indeed be "grandly suspicious." In this list I have marked with a star [\*] all such variations as I consider to be obvious corrections: there will not, I think, be found among them any that might not have been made by an ordinarily intelligent reader of the Qo. A number of others I have marked with a dagger [†]: most of these seem to me very palpable blunders, and I should not have encumbered my list with them were it not that Mr Knight has adopted and popularized them in his numerous editions. Another few I have marked with a parallel [||]: their acceptance or rejection would, I presume, depend on the degree of authority to be assigned to Qo. or Fo. For the rest, which I have left blank, I think we need not look further than to the caprice or carelessness of the printer for their origin.

The quotations are taken from the Qo., followed by the variations of the Fo.

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| I. i. 51—     | " <i>he is</i> "— <i>he's</i> .                                 |
| I. i. 90—     | " <i>ere a be cured</i> "— <i>ere he be cur'd</i> .             |
| I. i. 93—     | " <i>You will neuer</i> "— <i>you'l ne'er</i> .                 |
| I. i. 96—     | " <i>are you come to meet your trouble</i> "— <i>you are</i> .  |
| † I. i. 106—  | " <i>Were you in doubt sir</i> "— <i>sir om</i> .               |
| I. i. 147—    | " <i>That is the summe of all</i> "— <i>This</i> .              |
| I. i. 314—    | " <i>How sweetly you do minister to loue</i> "— <i>do you</i> . |
| † I. ii. 4—   | " <i>I can tell you strange newes</i> "— <i>strange om</i> .    |
| I. ii. 10—    | " <i>in mine orchard</i> "— <i>my</i> .                         |
| † I. ii. 111— | " <i>were thus much ouer-heard</i> "— <i>much om</i> .          |
| I. iii. 8—    | " <i>what blessing brings it</i> "— <i>bringeth</i> .           |
| I. iii. 9—    | " <i>at least a patient sufferance</i> "— <i>yet</i> .          |



- † I. iii. 25— “where it is impossible you should take *true* root”—*true* om.
- † I. iii. 63— “I whipt *me* behind the arras”—*me* om.
- II. i. 17— “if *a* could”—*he*.
- II. i. 34— “light *on* a husband”—*upon*.
- † II. i. 56— “*father*, as it please you”—*father* om.
- † II. i. 65— “to make *an* account of her life”—*an* om.
- II. i. 146— “he both *pleases* men”—*pleaseth*.
- II. i. 195— “*county*”—*count*.
- † II. i. 222— “I tolde him, and I thinke *I* tolde him true”—last *I* om.
- † II. i. 223— “the *goodwil* of this young Lady”—*will*.
- † II. i. 263— “to binde him *vp* a rod”—*vp* om.
- II. i. 251— “*that* I was duller than a great thawe”—*and that*.
- † II. i. 288— “a double heart for *his* single one”—*a*.
- II. i. 346— “out a question”—*of*.
- II. i. 370— “*countie*”—*counte*.
- † II. i. 376— “to haue al things answer *my* mind”—*my* om.
- † II. ii. 37— “as *in loue* of your brothers honor”—*in a loue*.
- II. ii. 49— “such seeming *truth* of Heroes disloyaltie”—*truths*.
- † II. ii. 57— “Be *you* constant”—*thou*.
- \* II. iii. 141— “your daughter told *of vs*”—*vs of*.
- || II. iii. 162— “he would *make but* a sport of it”—*but make*.
- II. iii. 178— “what *a* will say”—*he*.
- II. iii. 192— “*Before* God”—*Fore*.
- † II. iii. 197— “you may *say* he is wise”—*see*.
- † II. iii. 199— “a *most* christianlike feare”—*most* om.
- † II. iii. 207— “shall we go *seeke* Benedicke”—*see*.
- II. iii. 217— “vnworthy *so* good a lady”—*to haue so*.
- † II. iii. 223— “*gentlewomen*”—*gentlewoman*.
- \* III. i. 4— “*Vrsley*”—*Vrsula*.
- || III. i. 12— “to listen our *propose*”—*purpose*.
- || III. i. 58— “lest *shee*le make sport at it”—*she*.
- || III. i. 104— “*Shees limed* I warrant you”—*tane*.
- III. ii. 39— “as you would haue it *appeare* he is”—*to appeare*.
- † III. ii. 64— “conclude, *conclude*, he is in loue”—*conclude* om.
- III. ii. 106— “she *has bin*”—*hath beene*.
- † III. ii. 132— “beare it coldely but ‘till *midnight*”—*night*.
- † III. iii. 37— “for the watch to babble and *to talke*”—*to* om.

- III. iii. 45— “bid *those* that are drunke”—*them*.  
 \* III. iii. 85— “the *statutes*”—*statues*.  
 III. iii. 134— “this vij. *yeere*”—*yeares*.  
 † III. iii. 148— “Al this I see, and *I* see”—*I* om.  
 † III. iii. 162— “And thought *they* Margaret was Hero?”—*thy*.  
 || III. iii. 48— “youle *see* he shall lacke no barnes”—*look*.  
 || III. v. 27— “a thousand *pound* more”—*times*.  
 III. v. 34— “*ha* tane”—*haue*.  
 † III. v. 54— “as *it* may appeare vnto you”—*it* om.  
 † IV. i. 77— “I charge thee *do so*, as thou art my child”—*doe*.  
 IV. i. 88— “Why then *are you* no maiden”—*you are*.  
 IV. i. 97— “Not to be *spoke* of”—*spoken*.  
 || IV. i. 163— “In angel whitenesse *beate* away those blushes”—*bears*.  
 \* IV. i. 277— “Do not *sweare* and eate it”—*sweare by it*.  
 † IV. i. 293— “You kill me to deny *it*”—*it* om.  
 IV. i. 318— “*Counte, Counte* Comfect”—*Count, Comfect*.  
 IV. i. 336— “I will kisse your hand, and so *I* leaue you”—*I* om.  
 \* IV. ii. 53— “*Yea by masse*”—*by th’*.  
 V. i. 7— “whose wrongs *doe* sute with mine”—*doth*.  
 \* V. i. 24— “Would giue preceptiall *medicine* to rage”—*medicine*.  
 V. i. 63— “*mine* innocent child”—*my*.  
 V. i. 162— “true *said* she, a fine little one”—*saies*.  
 † V. i. 272— “Art *thou* the slaue”—*thou thou* (printing the verse as prose).  
 † V. i. 81— “he shall liue no longer in *monument* then the *bell rings*”—*monuments . . . bells ring*.  
 \* V. iii. 10— “Praising her when I am *dead*”—*dombe*.  
 || V. iii. 21— “*Heauily heauily*”—*Heauenly, heauenly*.  
 V. iv. 7— “all things *sorts*”—*sort*.

The Acts, scenes and lines of the Facsimile are numbered in accordance with the Globe edition on the outer margin; on this margin also a dagger [†] marks every line varying in any way in its *text* from the Fo.; lines peculiar to the Qo. and omitted in Fo. are marked with an asterisk [\*]. On the inner margin a dagger marks any variation of the stage directions or of the prefixes to speeches, and a caret [^] marks the places where additional stage directions and the Act divisions are found in the Fo.

P. A. DANIEL.

Sept. 1886.



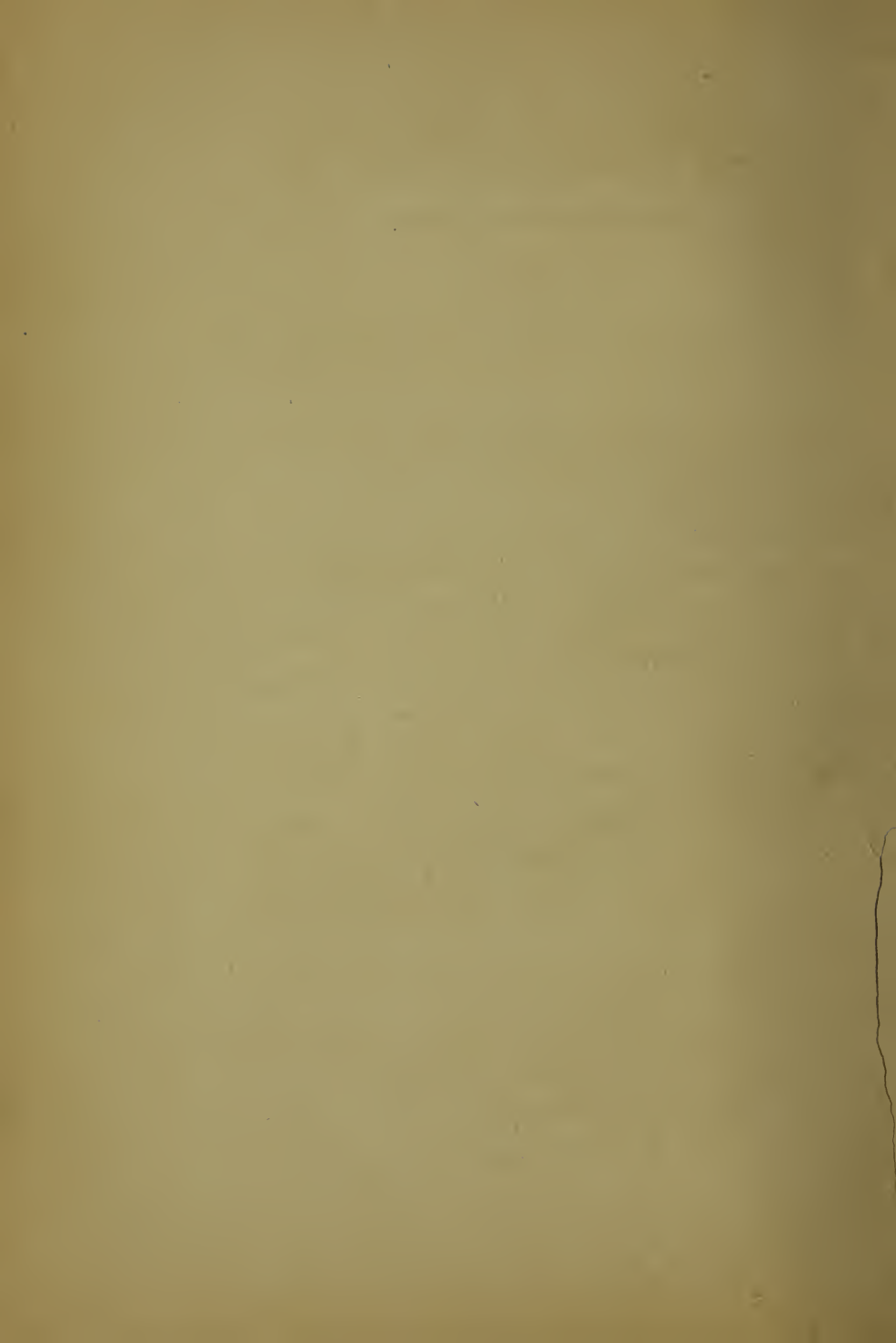
# Much adoe about Nothing.

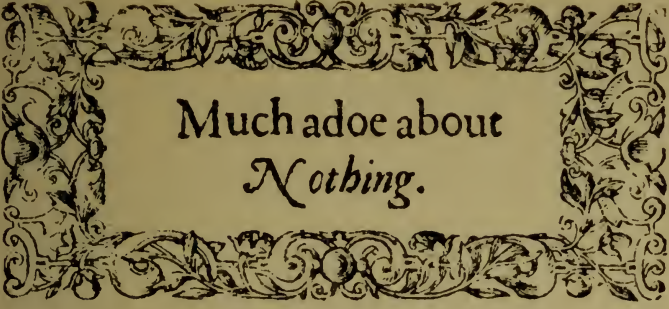
*As it hath been sundrie times publikely  
acted by the right honourable, the Lord  
Chamberlaine his seruants.*

*Written by William Shakespeare.*



L O N D O N  
Printed by V.S. for Andrew Wise, and  
William Aspley.  
1600.





Much adoe about  
*Nothing.*

*Enter Leonato gouernour of Messina, Imogen his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his neece, with a messenger.*

l.i.

*Leonato,*

**L**earne in this letter, that don Peter of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

*Mess.* He is very neare by this, he was not three leagues off when I left him.

*Leona.* How many gentlemen haue you lost in this action?

*Mess.* But few of any sort, and none of name.

*Leona.* A victory is twice it selfe, when the atchiuer brings home ful numbers: I find here, that don Peter hath bestowed much honour on a yong Florentine called Claudio.

*Mess.* Much deseru'd on his part, and equally remembered by don Pedro, he hath borne himselfe beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion, he hath indeed better betred expectation then you must expect of me to tell you how.

*Leo.* He hath an vnckle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

*Mess.* I haue already deliuered him letters, and there appears much ioy in him, euen so much, that ioy could not shew it selfe modest enough, without a badge of bitternesse.

*Leo.* Did he breake out into teares?

*Mess.* In great measure.

## Much adoe

28 *Leo.* A kind ouerflow of kindnesse, there are no faces trueer  
then those that are so washt, how much better is it to weepe at  
ioy, then to ioy at weeping?

*Beatr.* I pray you, is Signior Mountanto returnd from the  
warres or no?

32 *Messen.* I know none of that name, ladie, there was none  
such in the army of any sort.

*Leonato* What is he that you aske for neece?

36 *Hero* My cosen meanes Signior Benedicke of Padua.

*Mess.* O hee's returnd, and as pleasant as euer he was.

40 *Bea.* He set vp his bills here in Messina, and challenge  
Cupid at the Flight, and my vncles foole reading the chalenge  
subscribed for Cupid, and challenge him at the Burbolt: I  
44 pray you, how many hath he kild and eaten in these warres?  
but how many hath he kild? for indeede I promised to eate all  
of his killing.

*Leo.* Faith neece you taxe Signior Benedicke too much,  
but heele be meet with you, I doubt it not.

48 *Mess.* He hath done good seruice lady in these warres.

† *Beat.* You had mustly vittaile, and he hath holpe to eate it,  
52 he is a very valiaunt trencher man, he hath an excellent sto-  
macke.

*Mess.* And a good souldier too, lady.

*Beat.* And a good souldiour to a Lady, but what is he to a  
Lord?

56 *Mess.* A lord to a lord, a man to a man, stufft with al hono-  
rable vertues.

60 *Beat.* It is so indeed, he is no lesse then a stuff man, but for  
the stuffing wel, we are al mortall.

64 *Leo.* You must not, sir, mistake my neece, there is a kind  
of inery warre betwixt Signior Benedicke and her, they neuer  
meet but there's a skirmish of wit betwecne them.

68 *Beat.* Alas he gets nothing by that, in our last conflict, 4 of his  
fue wits went halting off, and now is the whole man governd  
with one, so that if he haue wit enough to keep himself warm,  
let him beare it for a difference between himself and his horse,  
for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reason-  
ble

about Nothing.

Li.

ble creature, who is his companion now? he hath cuery month a new sworne brother.

72

*Mess.* Ist possible?

*Beat.* Very easly possible, he weares his faith but as the fashion of his hat, it euer changes with the next blocke.

76

*Mess.* I see lady the gentleman is not in your bookes.

*Beat.* No, and he were, I would burue my study, but I pray you who is his companion? is there no yong squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the diuell?

80

*Mess.* He is most in the companie of the right noble Claudio.

84

*Beat.* O Lord, he will hang vpon him like a discase, hee is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently madde, God help the noble Claudio, if he haue caught the Benedicte, it will cost him a thousand pound ere a be cuied.

88

*Mess.* I will holde friends with you Ladie.

†

*Beat.* Do good friend.

92

*Leon.* You will neuer runne madde niece.

†

*Beat.* No, not till a hote Ianuary.

*Mess.* Don Pedro is approacht.

*Enter don Pedro, Claudio, Benedicke, Balthazar and Iohn the bastard.*

*Pedro* Good signior Leonato, are you come to meet your trouble : the fashion of the world is, to auoyd cost, and you incounter it.

96 †

*Leon.* Neuer came trouble to my house, in the likenesse of your grace, for trouble being gone, comfort should remaine: but when you depart from mee, sorrow abides, and happines takes his leauc.

100

*Pedro* You embrace your charge too willingly : I thincke this is your daughter.

104

*Leonato* Her mother hath many times tolde me so.

*Bened.* Were you in doubt sir that you askt her?

†

*Leonato* Signior Benedicke, no, for then were you a child.

108

*Pedro* You haue it full Benedicke, wee may ghesse by this, what you are, being a man, truely the Lady fathers her selfe:

112

## *Much adoe*

be happy Lady, for you are like an honourable father.

116 *Be.* If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not haue his head on her shoulders for all Messina as like him as she is.

*Beat.* I wonder that you will still be talking, signior Benedicke, no body markes you.

120 *Bene.* What my deere lady Disdaine! are you yet liuing?

*Bea.* Is it possible Disdaine should die, while she hath such meete foode to feede it, as signior Benedicke? Curtesie it selfe must conuert to Disdaine, if you come in her presence.

124 *Bene.* Then is curtesie a turne-coate, but it is certaine I am loued of all Ladies, onelie you excepted: and I would I could finde in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truely I loue none.

*Beat.* A deere happinesse to women, they would else haue beene troubled with a pernicious suter, I thanke God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that, I had rather heare my dog barke at a crow, than a man sweare he loues me.

132 *Bene.* God keepe your Ladiship stil in that mind, so some Gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scratcht face.

136 *Beat.* Scratching could not make it worse, and twere such a face as yours were.

*Bene.* Well, you are a rare parrat teacher.

140 *Beat.* A bird of my tongue. is better than a beast of yours.

*Ben.* I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer, but keep your way a Gods name, I haue done.

144 *Beat.* You alwayes end with a iades tricke, I knowe you of olde.

†  
148 *Pedro* That is the summe of all: Leonato, signior Claudio, and signior Benedicke, my deere friend Leonato, hath inuited you all, I tell him we shall stay here, at the least a moneth, and he heartily praies some occasion may detaine vs longer, I dare sweare he is no hypocrite, but praies from his heart.

152 *Leon.* If you sweare, my lord, you shall not be forsworne, let mee bidde you welcome, my lord, being reconciled to the Prince your brother: I owe you all ductie.

156 *Iohn* I thanke you, I am not of many wordes, but I thanke you  
*Leon.*



about Nothing.

7  
I.i.

Leon. Please it your grace leade on?

Pedro Your hand Leonato, we wil go together.

Exeunt. Manent Benedicke & Claudio.

Claudio. Benedicke, didst thou note the daughter of Signior

Benedicke. I noted her not, but I lookte on her, (Leonato?)

Claudio. Is she not a modest yong ladie?

Benedicke. Do you question me as an honest man should doe, for my simple true iudgement? or would you haue me speake after my custome, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claudio No, I pray thee speake in sober iudgement.

Benedicke. Why yfaith me thinks shees too low for a hie praise, too browne for a faire praise, and too litle for a great praise, onlie this commendation I can affoord her, that were shee other then she is, she were vnhandsome, and being no other, but as she is, I do not like her.

Claudio Thou thinkest I am in sport, I pray thee tell mee truelie how thou lik'st her.

Benedicke. Would you buie her that you enquier after her?

Claudio Can the world buie such a iewel?

Benedicke. Yea, and a case to putte it into, but speake you this with a sad brow? or doe you play the flowing iacke, to tell vs Cupid is a good Hare-finder, and Vulcan a rare Carpenter: Come, in what key shall a man take you to go in the song?

Claudio In mine eie, shee is the sweetest Ladie that euer I lookt on.

Benedicke. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: theres her cofin, and she were not possesst with a fury, exceedes her as much in beautie, as the first of Maie dooth the last of December: but I hope you haue no intent to turne husband, haue you?

Claudio I would scarce trust my selfe, though I had sworne the contrarie, if Hero would be my wife.

Benedicke. Ist come to this? in faith hath not the worlde one man but he will weare his cappe with suspition? shall I neuer see a batcheller of three score againe? go to yfaith, and thou wilt needes thrust thy necke into a yoke, weare the print of it, and sigh away fundaies: looke, don Pedro is returned to seeke you.

Enter

160

166

170

177

178

182

186

190

194

198

202

*Much adoe**Enter don Pedro, John the bastard.*

206 *Pedro* What secret hath held you here, that you followed  
not to Leonatoes?

*Bene.* I would your Grace would constraime me to tell.

210 *Pedro* I charge thee on thy allegeance.

214 *Bene.* You heare, Count Claudio, I can be secret as a dumb  
man, I woulde haue you thinke so (but on my allegiance,  
marke you this, on my allegiance) he is in loue, with who? now  
that is your Graces part: marke how short his answer is, with  
Hero Leonatoes short daughter.

*Claudio.* If this were so, so were it vttered.

218 *Bened.* Like the olde tale, my Lord, it is not so, nor twas  
not so: but indeede, God forbid it should be so.

222 *Claudio* If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it  
should be otherwise.

*Pedro* Amen, if you loue her, for the Lady is very well  
worthy.

*Claudio* You speake this to fetch me in, my Lord.

226 *Pedro* By my troth I speake my thought.

*Claudio* And in faith, my Lord, I spoke mine.

*Bened.* And by my two faiths and troths, my Lorde, I  
spoke mine.

230 *Claudio.* That I loue her, I feele.

*Pedro* That she is worthy, I know.

234 *Bened.* That I neither feele how she should be loued, nor  
know how she should be worthie, is the opinion that fire can  
not melt out of me, I will die in it at the stake.

*Pedro* Thou wast euer an obstinate herctique in the de-  
spight of Beauty.

238 *Claudio.* And neuer could maintaine his part, but in the force  
of his wil.

242 *Bene.* That a woman conceiued me, I thanke her: that she  
brought me vp, I likewise giue her most humble thankes: but  
that I will haue a rechate winded in my forehead, or hang my  
bugle in an inuisible baldricke, all women shall pardon mee:  
246 because I will not doe them the wrong to mistrust any, I will  
doe my selfe the right to trust none: and the fine is, (for the  
which

## about Nothing.

l.i.

which I may go the finer,) I will liue a bacheller.

*Pedro* I shall see thee ere I die, looke pale with loue.

*Bene.* With anger, with sicknesse, or with hunger, my Lord, not with loue: proue that euer I loose more blood with loue then I will get againe with drinking, picke out mine eies with a Ballad-makers penne, and hang me vp at the doore of a brothel house for the signe of blinde Cupid.

*Pedro* Well, if euer thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prouea notable argument.

*Bene.* If I do, hang me in a bottle like a Cat, and shoote at me, and he that hits me, let him be clapt on the shoulder, and calld Adam.

*Pedro* Well, as time shal trie: in time the sauage bull doth beare the yoake.

*Benz.* The sauage bull may, but if euer the sensible Benedicke beare it, plucke off the bulls hornes, and set them in my forehead, and let me be vildly painted, and in such great letters as they write, here is good horse to hyre: let them signifie vnder my signe, here you may see Benedicke the married man.

*Claudio* If this should euer happen, thou wouldst be horn madde.

*Pedro* Nay, if Cupid haue not spent all his quiuer in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

*Bened.* I looke for an earthquake too then.

*Pedro* Well, you will temporize with the howres, in the meane time, good signior Benedicke, repaire to Leonatoes, commend me to him, and tell him I will not faile him at supper, for indeede he hath made great preparation.

*Bened.* I haue almost matter enough in mee for suche an Embassage, and so I commit you.

*Claudio.* To the tuition of God: from my house if I had it.

*Pedro* The sixt of Iuly: your louing friend Benedicke.

*Bened.* Nay mocke not, mocke not, the body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guardes are but slightly basted on neither, ere you flowt old ends any further, examine your conscience, and so I leaue you.

B

*exis*  
*Claudio*

250

254

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286

290

*Much adoe*

*Claudio* My liege, your Highnesse nowe may doe mee good.

294 *Pedro* My loue is thine to teach, teach it but how,  
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learne  
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

*Cla.* Hath Leonato any sonne, my lord?

298 *Pedro* No childe but Hero, thees his onely heire:  
Dooft thou affect her, Claudio?

*Claudio* O my lord,  
When you went onward on this ended action,  
300 I lookt vpon her with a souldiers eie,  
That likt, but had a rougher taske in hand,  
Than to driue liking to the name of loue:  
But now I am returnde, and that warre-thoughts,  
304 Haue left their places vacant: in their roomes,  
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,  
All prompting mee how faire yong Hero is,  
Saying I likt her ere I went to warres.

308 *Pedro* Thou wilt be like a loue presently,  
And tire the hearer with a booke of words,  
If thou dost loue faire Hero, cherish it,  
And I wil breake with hir, and with her father,  
312 And thou shalt haue her: wast not to this end,  
That thou beganst to twist so fine a storie?

† *Cla.* How sweetly you do minister to loue,  
That know loues griefe by his complexion!  
316 But lest my liking might too sodaine seeme,  
I would haue salude it with a longer treatise.

*Pedro* What need the bridge much broder then the flood?  
The fairest graunt is the necessitic:  
320 Looke what wil serue is fit: tis once, thou louest,  
And I wil fit thee with the remedie,  
I know we shall haue reuelling to night,  
I wil assume thy part in some disguise,  
324 And tell faire Hero I am Claudio,  
And in her bosome ile vnclasp my heart,  
And take her hearing prisoner with the force

And

about Nothing.

I.i.

And strong incounter of my amorous tale:  
Then after to her father will I breake,  
And the conclusion is, she shal be thine,  
In practise let vs put it presently.

328

*exeunt.*

*Enter Leonato and an old man brother to Leonato*

I.ii.

*Leo.* How now brother, where is my cosen your sonne, hath he provided this musique?

*Old* He is very busie about it, but brother, I can tell you strange newes that you yet dreamt not of.

† †

*Leo.* Are they good?

*Old* As the euent stamps them, but they haue a good couer: they shew well outward, the prince and Count Claudio walking in a thicke pleached alley in mine orchard, were thus much ouer-heard by a man of mine: the prince discovered to Claudio that he loued my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a daunce, and if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly breake with you of it.

8

†

†

12

*Leo* Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

16

*Old* A good sharp fellow, I wil send for him, and question him your selfe.

20

*Leo.* No, no, we wil hold it as a dreame til it appeare it self: but I will acquaint my daughter withall, that she may bee the better prepared for an answer, if peraduenture this be true: go you and tel hir of it: cosins, you know what you haue to doe, O I crie you mercie friend, go you with me and I wil vse your skill: good cosin haue a care this busie time.

24

*exeunt.*

28 †

*Enter sir John the bastard, and Conrade his companion.*

I.iii.

*Con.* What the goodycere my lord, why are you thus out of measure sad?

*John* There is no measure in the occasion that breeds, therefore the sadnesse is without limit.

4

*Con.* You should heare reason.

*John* And when I haue heard it, what blessing brings it?

8 †

*Con* If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.

†

*John* I wonder that thou (being as thou saist, thou art, borne vnder Saturne) goest about to apply a morall medicine, to a

12

## *Much adoe*

mortifying mischief: I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I haue cause, and smile at no mans iests, eate when I haue stomach, and wait for no mans leisure: sleep when I am drowsie, and tend on no mans businesse, laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humor.

*Con.* Yea but you must not make the full show of this till you may do it without controllment, you haue of late stoode out against your brother, and he hath tane you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take true root, but by the faire weather that you make your self, it is needful that you frame the season for your owne harvest.

*John.* I had rather be a canker in a hedge, then a rose in his grace, and it better fits my bloud to be disdain'd of all, then to fashion a cariage to rob loue from any: in this (thogh I cannot be said to be a flatering honest man) it must not be denied but I am a plain dealing villaine, I am trusted with a mussel, and enfranchisde with a clogge, therefore I haue decreed, not to sing in my cage: if I had my mouth I would bite: if I had my liberty I would do my liking: in the mean time, let me be that I am, and seeke not to alter me.

*Con.* Can you make no vse of your discontent?

*John.* I make all vse of it, for I vse it only,  
Who comes here? what newes Borachio?

*Enter Borachio.*

*Bor.* I came yonder from a great supper, the prince your brother is royally entertain'd by Leonato, and I can giue you intelligence of an intended mariage.

*John.* Wil it serue for any model to build mischief on? what is he for a foole that bettothes himselfe to vnquietnesse?

*Bor.* Mary it is your bothers right hand.

*John.* Who, the most exquisite Claudio?

*Bor.* Euen he.

*John.* A proper squier, and who, and who, which way looks he?

*Bor.* Mary one Hero the daughter and heire of Leonato.

*John.* A very forward March-chicke, how came you to this?

*Bor.*

## about Nothing.

l.iii.

*Bor* Being entertain'd for a perfumer, as I was smoaking a musty roome, comes me the prince and Claudio, hand in hand in sad conference: I whipt me behind the arras, and there heard it agreed vpon, that the prince should wooe Hero for himselfe, and hauing obtain'd her, giue her to Counte Claudio.

60

*John* Come, come, let vs thither, this may proue food to my displeasure, that yong start- vp hath all the glory of my ouerthrow: if I can crosse him any way, I blesse my selfe euery way, you are both sure, and wil assist me.

†

64

68

†

*Conr.* To the death my Lord.

72

*John* Let vs to the great supper, their cheere is the greater that I am subdued, would the cooke were a my mind, shall we go proue whats to be done?

*Bor.* Weele wait vpon your lordship.

*exit.*

77

*Enter Leonato, his brother, his wife, Hero his daughter, and  
Beatrice his neece, and a kinsman.*

---

 II.1.

*Leonato* Was not counte Iohn here at supper?  
*brother* I saw him not.

*Beatrice* How tartely that gentleman lookes, I neuer can see him but I am heart-burn'd an hower after.

+

*Hero* He is of a very melancholy disposition.

*Beatrice* He were an excellent man that were made iust in the mid-way between him and Benedick, the one is too like an image and saies nothing, and the other too like my ladies eldest Ionne, euermore talling.

8

*Leonato* Then halfe signior Benedickes tongue in Counte Iohns mouth, and halfe Counte Iohns melancholy in Signior Benedickes face.

12

*Beatrice* With a good legge and a good foote vnckle, and money inough in his purse, such a man would winne any woman in the world if a could get her good will,

16

*Leonato* By my troth neece thou wilt neuer get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

†

*brother* Infaith shees too curst.

20

*Beatrice* Too curst is more then curst, I shall lessen  
Gods

*Much adoe.*

Gods sending that way, for it is saide, God sends a curst cow short hornes, but to a cow too curst, he sends none.

*Leonato* So, by being too curst, God will send you no hornes.

*Beatrice* Iust, if he send me no husband, for the which blessing I am at him vpon my knees euery morning and euening: Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face, I had rather lie in the woollen!

*Leonato* You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

*Beatrice* What should I do with him, dresse him in my apparell and make him my waiting gentlewoman? he that hath a beard, is more then a youth: and he that hath no beard, is lesse then a man: and he that is more then a youth, is not for me, and he that is lesse then a man, I am not for him, therefore I will euen take sixpence in earnest of the Berrord, and leade his apes into hell.

*Leonato* Well then, go you into hell.

*Beatrice* No but to the gate, and there will the diuell meete me like an old cuckold with hornes on his head, and say, get you to heauen Beatrice, get you to heauen, heeres no place for you maids, so deliuer I vp my apes and away to saint Peter: for the heauens, he shewes me where the Batchellers sit, and there liue we as mery as the day is long.

*brother* Well neece, I trust you will be rulde by your father.

*Beatrice* Yes faith, it is my cofens duetie to make cursie and say, father, as it please you: but yet for all that cofin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make an other cursie, and say, father, as it please me.

*Leonato* Well neece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

*Beatrice* Not til God make men of some other mettall then earth, would it not grieue a woman to be ouer-masterd with a peece of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of waiward marle? no vnecke, ile none: Adams sonnes are my brethren, and truely I holde it a sinne to match in my kinred.

*Leonato*



*about Nothing.*

II.1.

*Leonato* Daughter, remember what I told you, if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

*Beatrice* The fault will be in the musique cosin, if you be not wooed in good time: if the prince be too important, tell him there is measure in euery thing, and so daunce out the answer, for here me Hero, wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch ijgge, a measure, and a cinquepace: the first suite is hot and hasty like a Scotch ijgge (and ful as fantastickall) the wedding manerly modest (as a measure) full of state and aunchentry, and then comes Repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinquepace faster and faster, til he sincke into his graue.

*Leonato* Cosin you apprehend passing shrewdly.

*Beatrice* I haue a good eie vnckle, I can see a church by day-light.

*Leonato* The reuellers are entring brother, make good roome.

*Enter prince, Pedro, Claudio, and Benedicke, and Balthasar,  
or dumb Iohn.*

*Pedro* Lady will you walke about with your friend?

*Hero* So, you walke softly, and looke sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walke, and especially when I walk away.

*Pedro* With me in your company.

*Hero* I may say so when I please.

*Pedro* And when please you to say so?

*Hero* When I like your fauour, for God defend the lute should be like the case.

*Pedro* My visor is Philemons roose, within the house is Iouc.

*Hero* Why then your visor should be thatcht.

*Pedro* Speake low if you speake louc.

*Bene.* Well, I would you did like me,

*Mar.* So would not I for your owne sake, for I haue many ill qualities.

*Bene.* Which is one?

*Mar.* I say my praiers alowd,

*Bene.*

*Much adoe*

*Bene.* I loue you the better, the hearers may cry Amen.

*Marg.* God match me with a good dauncer.

112

*Balth.* Amen.

*Marg.* And God keepe him out of my sight when the daunce is done : answer Clarke.

*Balth.* No more words, the Clarke is answered.

116

*Vrsula* I know you well enough, you are signior Antonio.

*Antonio.* At a word I am not.

120

*Vrsula* I knowe you by the wagling of your head.

*Antonio.* To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

*Vrsula* You coulde neuer doe him so ill well, vnlesse you were the very man : heeres his drie hand vp and downe , you are he, you are he.

124

*Antonio.* At a word, I am not.

*Vrsula* Come, come, do you thinke I do not know you by your excellent wit? can vertue hide it selfe? go to, inumme, you are he, graces will appeere, and theres an end.

128

*Beat.* Will you not tell me who tolde you so?

*Bened.* No, you shall pardon me.

132

*Beat.* Nor will you not tell me who you are?

*Bened.* Not now.

*Beat.* That I was disdainefull, and that I had my good wit out of the hundred mery tales: wel, this was signior Benedick that said so.

136

*Bened.* Whats he?

*Beat.* I am sure you know him well enough.

*Bened.* Not I, beleeue me.

140

*Beat.* Did he neuer make you laugh?

*Bened.* I pray you what is he?

*Beat.* Why he is the princes ieafter, a very dul fool, only his gift is, in deuising impossible staunders, none but Libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villanic, for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and beate him : I am sure he is in the Fleete, I would he had boorded me.

144

†

148

*Bene.* When I know the Gentleman, ile tell him what you say.

*Beat.*

*about Nothing.*

II.i.

*Beat.* Do, do, heele but break a comparison or two on me, which peraduenture, (not markt, or not laught at) strikes him into melancholy and then theres a partridge wing faued, for the foole will eate no supper that night : wee must follow the leaders.

*Bene.* In euery good thing.

*Beat.* Nay, if they leade to any ill, I will leaue them at the next turning.

*Dance* *exeunt*

*John* Sure my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath with-drawne her father to breake with him about it : the Ladies follow her, and but one visor remaines.

*Borachio* And that is Claudio, I knowe him by his bearing.

*John* Are not you signior Benedicke?

*Claud.* You know me well, I am he.

*John* Signior, you are very neere my brother in his loue, he is enamourd on Hero, I pray you disswade him from her, she is no equall for his birth, you may doe the parte of an honest man in it.

*Claudio* How know you he loues her?

*John* I heard him swaere his affection.

*Borac.* So did I too, and he swore hee would marry her to night.

*John* Come let vs to the banquet. *exeunt: manet Claud.*

*Claud.* Thus answer I in name of Benedicke, But heare these ill newes with the eares of Claudio:

Tis certaine so, the Prince wooes for himselfe,

Friendship is constant in all other things,

Saue in the office and affaires of loue :

Therefore all hearts in loue vse their owne tongues.

Let euery eie negotiate for it selfe,

And trust no Agent : for Beauty is a witch,

Against whose charmes, faith melteth into blood:

This is an accident of hourelly prooffe,

*(dicke*

Which I mistrusted not : farewell therefore Hero. *Enter Bene-Benedicke* Count Claudio.

*Claudio* Yea, the same.

C

*Bene.*

152

156

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168

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184

188

11.1

# Much adoe

192

*Bene.* Come, will you go with me?

*Claudio* Whither?

† 196

*Bene.* Euen to the next willow, about your owne busines, county: what fashion will you weare the garland of? about your necke, like an Usurers chaine? or vnder your arme, like a Lieutenants scarfte? you must weare it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

200

*Claudio* I wish him ioy of her.

*Bened.* Why thats spoken like an honest Drouier, so they sell bullockes: but did you thinke the Prince would haue ferued you thus?

204

*Claudio* I pray you leaue me.

*Benedicke* Ho now you strike like the blindman, twas the boy that stole your meate, and youle beate the post.

208

*Claudio* If it will not be, ile leaue you.

*exit*

212

*Benedicke* Aias poore hurt foule, now will hee creepe into sedges: but that my Ladie Beatrice should know me, and not know mee: the princes foole! hah, it may be I goe vnder that title because I am merry: yea but so I am apte to doe my selfe wrong: I am not so reputed, it is the base (though bitter) disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into her person, and so giues me out: well, ile be reuenged as I may.

216

*Enter the Prince, Hero, Leonato, Iohn and Borachio, and Conrade.*

220

*Pedro* Now signior, wheres the Counte, did you see him?

† 224

*Benedicke* Troth my lord, I haue played the part of Ladie Fame, I found him heere as melancholy as a Lodge in a Warren, I tolde him, and I thinke I tolde him true, that your grace had got the goodwil of this young Lady, and I offred him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to binde him vp a rod, as being worthie to bee whipt.

228

*Pedro* To be whipt, whats his fault?

*Benedicke* The flatte transgression of a Schoole-boy, who being ouer-ioyed with finding a birds nest, shewes it his companion, and he steales it.

232

*Pedro* Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? the transgression

tion

## about Nothing.

II. i.

tion is in the stealer.

*Benedicke* Yet it had not beene amisse the rodde had beene made, & the garland too, for the garland he might haue worn himselfe, and the rodde he might haue bestowed on you, who (as I take it) haue stolne his birds nest.

*Pedro* I wil but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

*Benedicke* If their singing answer your saying, by my faith you say honestly.

*Pedro* The ladie Beatrice hath a quarrell to you, the Gentleman that daunst with her, told her shee is much wrongd by you.

*Bened.* O shee misusde me past the indurance of a blocke: an oake but with one greene leafe on it, would haue answered her: my very visor beganne to assume life, and scold with her: she tolde me, not thinking I had beene my selfe, that I was the Princes iester, that I was duller than a great thawe, huddling iest vpon iest, with such impossible conueiance vpon me, that I stood like a man at a marke, with a whole army shooting at me: she speakes poynyards, and euery word stabbes: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no liuing neere her, shee would infest to the north starre: I woulde not marry her, though shee were indowed with al that Adam had left him before he transgrest, she would haue made Hercules haue turnd spit, yea, and haue cleft his club to make the fire too: come, talke not of her, you shall find her the infernall Ate in good apparell, I would to God some scholler woulde coniure her, for certainly, while she is heere, a man may liue as quiet in hell, as in a sanctuarie, and people sinne vpon purpose, because they would goe thither, so indeede all disquiet, horreur, and perturbation followes her.

*Enter Claudio and Beatrice.*

*Pedro* Looke heere she comes.

*Benedicke* Will your grace command me any seruice to the worldes end? I will go on the slightest arrand now to the Antypodes that you can deuise to send mee on: I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the furthest inch of Asia: bring you

*Much adoe*

the length of Prester Johns foot: fetch you a haire off the great Chams beard: doe you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather than holde three words conference, with this harpy, you haue no imployment for me?

*Pedro* None, but to desire your good company.

*Benedicke* O God sir, heeres a dish I loue not, I cannot indure my Ladie Tongue. *exit.*

*Pedro* Come Lady, come, you haue lost the heart of signior Benedicke.

*Beatrice* Indeed my Lord, he lent it me awhile, and I gaue him vse for it, a double heart for his single one, mary once before he wonne it of me, with false dice, therefore your grace may well say I haue lost it.

*Pedro* You haue put him downe Lady, you haue put him downe.

*Beatrice* So I would not he should do me, my Lord, lest I should prooue the mother of fooles: I haue brought Counte Claudio, whom you sent me to seeke.

*Pedro* Why how now Counte, wherefore are you sad?

*Claudio* Not sad my Lord.

*Pedro* How then? sicke?

*Claudio* Neither, my Lord.

*Beatrice* The Counte is neither sad, nor sicke, nor merry, nor well: but ciuill Counte, ciuill as an orange, and something of that iealous complexion.

*Pedro* Ifaith Lady, I think your blazon to be true, though ile be sworne, if he be so, his conceit is false: heere Claudio, I haue wooed in thy name, and faire Hero is won, I haue broke with her father, and his good will obtained, name the day of marriage, and God giue thee ioy.

*Leonato* Counte take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it.

*Beatrice* Speake Counte, tis your Qu.

*Claudio* Silence is the perfectest Herault of ioy, I were but little happy if I could say, how much? Lady, as you are mine, I am yours, I giue away my selfe for you, and doate vpon the exchange.

*Beatr.*

*about Nothing.*

II.i.

*Beat.* Speake cofin, or (if you cannot) stop his mouth with a kisse, and let not him speake neither.

*Pedro* Infaith lady you haue a merry heart.

324

*Beatr.* Yea my lord I thanke it, poore foole it keepes on the windy side of Care, my coosin tells him in his care that he is in her heart

328

*Clau.* And so she doth coosin.

†

*Beat.* Good Lord for aliance : thus goes euery one to the world but I, and I am sun-burnt, I may sit in a corner and crie, heigh ho for a husband.

332

*Pedro* Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

*Beat.* I would rather haue one of your fathers getting: hath your grace ne're a brother like you? your father got excellent husbands if a maide coulde come by them.

336

*Prince* Will you haue me? lady.

*Beatr.* No my lord, vnles I might haue another for working-daies, your grace is too coslly to weare euery day : but I beseech your grace pardon me, I was born to speake all mirth, and no matter.

340

*Prince* Your silence most offends me, and to be merry, best becomes you, for out a question, you were borne in a merry hower.

344

†

*Beatr.* No sure my lord, my mother cried, but then there was a starre daunst, and vnder that was I borne, cofins God giue you ioy.

348

*Leonato* Neece, will you looke to those things I tolde you of?

352

*Beat* I crie you mercy vnle, by your graces pardon.

*exit Beatrice.*

*Prince* By my troth a pleasant spirited lady.

356

*Leon.* Theres little of the melancholy element in her my lord, she is neuer sad, but when she sleeps, & not euer sad then: for I haue heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamt of unhappines, and wakt her selfe with laughing.

360

*Pedro* She cannot indure to heare tell of a husband.

*Leonato* O by no meanes, she mockes al her wooers out of sute.

364

*Much adoe*

*Prince* She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

*Leonato* O Lord, my lord, if they were but a weeke married, they would talke themselues madde.

*Prince* Countie Claudio, when meane you to goe to church?

*Claudio* To morow my lord, Time goes on crutches, til Loue haue all his rites.

*Leonato* Not til monday, my deare sonne, which is hence a iust feuennight, and a time too brieft too, to haue al things answer my mind.

*Prince* Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing, but I warrant thee Claudio, the time shall not go dully by vs, I wil in the interim, vndertake one of Hercules labors, which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the lady Beatrice into a mountaine of affection, th'one with th'other, I would faine haue it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall giue you direction.

*Leonato* My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights watchings.

*Claudio* And I my Lord.

*Prince* And you too gentle Hero?

*Hero* I wil do any modest office, my lord, to help my cosin to a good husband.

*Prince* And Benedicke is not the vnhopefullest husband that I know: thus farre can I praise him, he is of a noble strain, of approoued valour, and confirmde honesty, I will teach you how to humour your cosin, that she shall fall in loue with Benedicke, and I, with your two helps, wil so practise on Benedicke, that in dispight of his quicke wit, and his queasie stomacke, he shall fall in loue with Beatrice: if we can do this, Cupid is no longer an Archer, his glory shall bee ours, for we are the onely loue-gods, goe in with mee, and I will tell you my drift.

*exit.*

*Enter Iohn and Borachio.*

*Iohn* It is so, the Counte Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

*Borachio* Yea my lord, but I can crosse it.

*Iohn*



## about Nothing.

H.ii.

*John* Any barre, any crosse, any impediment, will be medicinal to me, I am sicke in displeasure to him, and whatsoeuer comes athwart his affection, ranges euently with mine, how canst thou crosse this marriage?

*Bor.* Not honestly my lord, but so couertly, that no dishonesty shall appeare in me.

*John* Shew me briefly how.

*Bor.* I thinke I told your lordship a yeere since, how much I am in the fauour of Margaret, the waiting gentlewoman to Hero.

*John* I remember.

*Bor.* I can at any vnseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to looke out at her ladies chamber window.

*John* What life is in that to be the death of this marriage?

*Bor.* The poison of that lies in you to temper, goe you to the prince your brother, spare not to tell him, that he hath wronged his honor in marrying the renowned Claudio, whose estimation do you mightily hold vp, to a contaminated state, such a one as Hero.

*John* What prooffe shall I make of that?

*Bor.* Prooffe enough, to misuse the prince, to vexe Claudio, to vndoe Hero, and kill Leonato, looke you for any other issue?

*John* Onely to dispight them I will endeouour any thing.

*Bor.* Go then, find me a meet houre, to draw don Pedro and the Counte Claudio alone, tell them that you know that Hero loues me, intend a kind of zeale both to the prince & Claudio (as in loue of your brothers honor who hath made this match) and his friends reputation, who is thus like to bee cosen'd with the semblance of a maid, that you haue discouer'd thus: they will scarcely beleeuue this without trial: offer them instances which shall beare no lesse likelihood, than to see me at her chamber window, heare me call Margaret Hero, heare Marg. terme me Claudio, & bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding, for in the mean time, I wil so fashion the matter, that Hero shal be absent, and there shal appeere such seeming truth of Heroes disloyaltie, that ieaalousie shal be cald assurance

*Muchadoe*

rance, and al the preparation ouerthrowne.

52

*John* Grow this to what aduerse issue it can, I will put it in practise: be cunning in the working this, and thy see is a thousand ducates.

†

56

*Bor.* Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

*John* I will presently go learne their day of marriage. *exit*

*Enter Benedicke alone.*

*Bene.* Boy.

*Boy* Signior.

4

*Bene.* In my chamber window lies a booke, bring it hither to me in the orchard.

8

*Boy.* I am here already sir. *exit.*

12

16

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24

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32

36

*Bene.* I know that, but I would haue thee hence and here againe. I do much wonder, that one man seeing how much another man is a foole, when he dedicates his behauiours to loue, wil after he hath laught at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his owne scorne, by falling in loue, and such a man is Claudio, I haue knowne when there was no musique with him but the drumme and the fife, and now had he rather heare the taber and the pipe: I haue knowne when he would haue walkt ten mile afoot, to see a good armour, and now will he lie ten nights awake caruing the fashion of a new dublet: he was wont to speake plaine, and to the purpose (like an honest man and a souldier) and now is he turnd ortography, his words are a very fantasticall banquet, iust so many strange dishes: may I be so conuerted and see with these eies? I cannot tell, I thinke not: I wil not be sworne but loue may transforme me to an oyster, but ile take my oath on it, till he haue made and oyster of me, he shall neuer make me such a foole: one woman is faire, yet I am well, another is wise, yet I am well: another vertuous, yet I am well: but till all graces be in one woman, one womā shal not com in my grace: rich she shal be thats certain, wife, or ile none, vertuous, or ile neuer cheapen her: faire, or ile neuer looke on her, mild, or come not neare me, noble, or not I for an angell, of good discourse, an excellent musitian, and her  
haire

about Nothing.

II.iii.

haire shall be of what colour it please God. hah! the prince and  
monfieur Loue, I wil hide me in the arbor.

*Enter prince, Leonato, Claudio, Musicke.*

*Prince* Come shall we heare this musique?

*Claud.* Yea my good lord: how stil the eucning is,  
As hush't on purpose to grace harmonie!

*Prince* See you where Benedicke hath hid himselfe?

*Claud.* O very wel my lord: the musique ended,  
Weele fit the kid-foxe with a penny worth.

*Enter Balthaser with musicke.*

*Prince* Come Balthaser, weele heare that song againe.

*Balth.* O good my lord, taxe not so bad a voice,  
To slaunder musicke any more then once.

*Prince* It is the witnesse still of excellencie,  
To put a strange face on his owne perfection,  
I pray thee sing, and let me wooe no more.

*Balth.* Because you talke of wooing I will sing,  
Since many a wooer doth commence his sute,  
To her he thinkes not worthy, yet he wooes,  
Yet will he sweare he loues.

*Prince* Nay pray thee come,  
Or if thou wilt hold longer argument,  
Do it in notes.

*Balth.* Note this before my notes,  
Theres not a note of mine thats worth the noting.

*Prince* Why these are very crotchets that he speakes,  
Note notes forsooth, and nothing.

*Bene.* Now diuine aire, now is his soule rauisht, is it not  
strange that sheepes guts should hale foules out of mens bo-  
dies? well a horne for my mony when alls done.

*The Song.*

Sigh no more ladies, sigh no more,  
Men were deceiuers euer,  
One foote in sea, and one on shore,  
To one thing constant neuer,  
Then sigh not so, but let them go,  
And be you blith and bonnie,

D

Con-

## *Much adoe*

Conuerting all your foundes of woe,  
Into hey nony nony.

72 Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,  
Of dumps so dull and heauy,  
The fraud of men was euer so,  
76 Since summer first was leauy,  
Then sigh not so, &c,

*Prince* By my troth a good song.

*Balth.* And an ill singer my lord.

80 *Prince* Ha, no no faith, thou singst wel enough for a shift.

*Ben.* And he had bin a dog that should haue howld thus,  
84 they would haue hangd him, and I pray God his bad voice  
bode no mischeefe, I had as liue haue heard the night-rauen,  
come what plague could haue come after it.

*Prince* Yea mary, doost thou heare Balthasar? I pray thee  
88 get vs some excellent musique: for to morow night we would  
haue it at the ladie Heroes chamber window.

*Balth.* The best I can my lord.

*Exit Balthasar.*

92 *Prince* Do so, farewell. Come hither Leonato, what was  
it you told mee of to day, that your niece Beatrice was in loue  
with signior Benedicke?

96 *Cla.* O I, stalke on, stalk on, the foule fits. I did neuer think  
that lady would haue loued any man.

100 *Leo.* No nor I neither, but most wonderful, that she should  
do dote on signior Benedicke, whome she hath in all outward  
behaviors seemd euer to abhorre.

*Bene.* Ist possible? sits the wind in that corner?

104 *Leo.* By my troth my Lord, I cannot tell what to thinke of  
it, but that she lotes him with an iraged affection, it is past the  
infinite of thought.

*Prince* May be she doth but counterfeit,

108 *Claud.* Faith like enough.

*Leon.* O God! counterfeit? there was neuer counterfeit of  
passion, came so neare the life of passion as she discouers it.

*Prince*

about Nothing.

11.iii.

*Prince* Why what effects of passion shewes she?

*Claud.* Baite the hookewel, this fish will bite.

*Leon.* What effects my Lord? she wil sit you, you heard my daughter tell you how.

*Claud.* She did indeede.

*Prince* How, how I pray you! you amaze me, I would haue thought her spirite had beene inuincible against all assaults of affection.

*Leo.* I would haue sworn it had, my lord, especially against Benedicke.

*Bene.* I should think this a gull, but that the white bearded fellow speakes it: knauery cannot sure hide himself in such reuerence.

*Claud.* He hath tane th' infection, hold it vp.

*Prince* Hath shee made her affection knowne to Benedicke?

*Leonato* No, and swears shee neuer will, thats her torment.

*Claudio* Tis true indeed, so your daughter saies: shall I, saies she, that haue so oft encountred him with scorne, write to him that I loue him?

*Leo.* This saies she now when she is beginning to write to him, for sheel be vp twenty times a night and there will she sit in her smocke til she haue writ a sheete of paper: my daughter tels vs all.

*Claud.* Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty iest your daughter told of vs.

*Leonato* O when she had writ it, and was reading it ouer, she found Benedicke and Beatrice betweene the sheete.

*Claudio* That,

*Leon.* O she tore the letter into a thousand halspence, raild at her self, that she should be so immodest to write, to one that she knew would flout her, I measure him, saies she, by my own spirit, for I should flout him, if he writ to me, yea thogh I loue him I should.

*Claud.* Then downe vpon her knees she falls, weepes, sobs, beates her heart, teares her haire, prayes, curses, O sweet Benedicke,

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*Much adoe*

dicke, God giue me patience.

158 *Leonato* She doth indeed, my daughter saies so, and the ex-  
tatie hath so much ouerborne her, that my daughter is some-  
time afeard shee will doe a desperate out-rage to her selfe, it is  
very true.

*Prince* It were good that Benedicke knew of it by some o-  
ther, if she will not discouer it.

† 162 *Claudio* To what end: he would make but a sport of it, and  
torment the poore Lady worse.

166 *Prince* And he should, it were an almes to hang him, shees  
an excellent sweete lady, and (out of all suspition,) she is vertu-  
ous.

*Claudio* And she is exceeding wise.

*Prince* In euery thing but in louing Benedicke.

170 *Leonato* O my Lord, wisdom and blood combating in  
so tender a body, we haue ten proofes to one, that blood hath  
the victory, I am sorry for her, as I haue iust cause, beeing her  
174 vncke, and her gardian.

*Prince* I would shee had bestowed this dotage on mee, I  
would haue daft all other respects, and made her halfe my selfe:  
† 178 I pray you tell Benedicke of it, and heare what a will say.

*Leonato* Were it good thinke you?

182 *Claudio* Hero thinkes surely she will die, for she sayes shee  
will die, if he loue her not, and shee will die ere shee make her  
loue knowne, and she will die if he wooe her, rather than shee  
will bate one breath of her accustomed crofnesse.

186 *Prince* She doth well, if shee shoulde make tender of her  
loue, tis very possible heele scorne it, for the man (as you know  
all) hath a contemptible spirite.

*Claudio* He is a very proper man.

190 *Prince* He hath indeede a good outward happines.

† *Claudio* Before God, and in my mind, very wise.

194 *Prince* Hee dooth indeede shew some sparkes that are like  
wit.

*Claudio* And I take him to be valiant.

† 198 *Prince* As Hector, I assure you, and in the manning of  
quarrels you may say he is wise, for either hee auoydes them  
with

## about Nothing.

II.iii.

with great discretion, or vndertakes them with a most christi-  
anlike feare.

*Leonato* If he do feare God, a must necessarily keep peace,  
if hee breake the peace, hee ought to enter into a quarrel with  
feare and trembling.

*Prince* And so will hee doe, for the man doth feare God,  
howsoeuer it seemes not in him, by some large iestes hee will  
make: well I am sory for your niece, shall we go seeke Bene-  
dicke, and tell him of her loue?

*Claudio* Neuer tell him, my Lord, let her weare it out with  
good counsell.

*Leonato* Nay thats impossible, shee may weare her heart  
out first.

*Prince* Well, we will heare further of it by your daughter,  
let it coole the while, I loue Benedicke wel, and I could wish  
he would modestly examine himselfe, to see how much he is  
vnworthy so good a lady.

*Leonato* My lord, will you walke? dinner is ready.

*Claudio* If he do not doate on her vpon this, I will neuer  
trust my expectation.

*Prince* Let there be the same nette spread for her, and that  
must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry: the spote  
will be, when they holde one an opinion of an others dotage,  
and no such matter, thats the scene that I would see, which  
will be merely a dumbe shew: let vs send her to call him in to  
dinner.

*Benedicke* This can be no tricke, the conference was sildly  
borne, they haue the trueth of this from Hero, they seeme to  
pittie the Lady: it seemes her affections haue their full bent:  
loue me? why it must be requited: I heare how I am censurde,  
they say I will beare my selfe proudly, if I perceiue the loue  
come from her: they say too, that she will rather die than giue  
anie signe of affection: I did neuer thinke to marry, I must  
not seeme proud, happy are they that heare their detractions,  
and can put them to mending: they say the Lady is faire, tis a  
trueth, I can beare them witness: and vertuous, tis so, I can-  
not reprocue it, and wise, but for louing me, by my troth it is

II.iii.

*Much adoe*

no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her follie, for I will be horribly in loue with her, I may chauce haue some odde quirkes and remnants of witte broken on me, because I haue railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loues the meate in his youth, that he cannot indure in his age. Shall quippes and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the carriere of his humor? No, the world must be peopled. When I saide I woulde die a batcheller, I did not think I should liue til I were married, here comes Beatrice: by this day, shees a faire lady, I doe spie some markes of loue in her.

*Enter Beatrice.*

† *Beatr.* Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

258 *Bene.* Faire Beatrice, I thanke you for your paines.

*Beat.* I tooke no more paines for those thankes, then you take paines to thanke me, if it had bin painful I would not haue come.

262 *Bene.* You take pleasure then in the message.

*Beat.* Yea iust so much as you may take vppon a kniues point, and choake a daw withall: you haue no stomach signior, fare you well.

*exit.*

† 266 *Bene.* Ha, against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner: theres a double meaning in that: I took no more paines for those thanks thē you took pains to thanke me, thats as much as to say, any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks: if I do not take pittie of her I am a villaine, if I do not loue her I am a Jew, I will go get her picture,

*exit.*

*Enter Hero and two Gentlewomen, Margaret, and Vrsley.*

† 4 *Hero.* Good Margaret runne thee to the parlour,  
There shalt thou find my cosin Beatrice,  
Proposing with the prince and Claudio,  
Whisper her eare and tell her I and Vrsley,  
Walke in the orchard, and our whole discourse  
Is all of her, say that thou ouer-heardst vs,  
And bid her steale into the pleached bowere  
3 Where hony-suckles ripened by the sunne,

Forbid



*about Nothing.*

III. I.

Forbid the sunne to enter:like fauourites,  
 Made proud by princes, that aduance their pride,  
 Against that power that bred it,there will she hide her,  
 To listen our propofe,this is thy office,  
 Beare thee well in it,and leaue vs alone.

*Marg.* Ile make her come I warrant you presently.

*Hero* Now Vrfula,when Beatrice doth come,  
 As we do trace this alley vp and downe,  
 Our talke must onely be of Benedicke,  
 When I do name him let it be thy part,  
 To praise him more than euer man did merite,  
 My talke to thee must be how Benedicke,  
 Is sicke in loue with Beatrice:of this matter,  
 Is little Cupids crafty arrow made,  
 That onely wounds by heare-fay:now begin,  
 For looke where Beatrice like a Lapwing runs  
 Close by the ground, to heare our conference.

*Enter Beatrice.*

*Vrfula* The pleasantst angling is to see the fish  
 Cut with her golden ores the siluer streame,  
 And greedily deuoure the treacherous baite:  
 So angle we for Beatrice, who euen now,  
 Is couched in the wood-bine couerture,  
 Feare you not my part of the dialogue.

*Hero* Then go we neare her that her eare loofe nothing,  
 Of the false sweete baite that we lay for it:  
 No truly Vrfula,she is too disdainfull,  
 I know her spirits are as coy and wild,  
 As haggerds of the rocke.

*Vrfula* But are you sure,  
 That Benedicke loues Beatrice so intirely?

*Hero* So saies the prince,and my new trothed Lord.

*Vrfula* And did they bid you tel her of it,madame?

*Hero* They did intreate me to acquaint her of it,  
 But I perswaded them,if they lou'de Benedicke,  
 To wish him wrastle with affection,  
 And neuer to let Beatrice know of it.

*Vrfula*

*Much adoe*

*Virgilia* Why did you so, dooth not the gentleman  
 Deferue as full as fortunate a bed,  
 As euer Beatrice shall couch vpon?

*Hero* O God of loue! I know he doth deferue,  
 As much as may be yeilded to a man:  
 But nature neuer framde a womans hart,  
 Of prowder stuffe then that of Beatrice:  
 Disdaine and Scorne ride sparkling in her cies,  
 Misprising what they looke on, and her wit  
 Valewes it selfe so highly, that to her  
 All matter els seemes weake: she cannot loue,  
 Nor take no shape not proiect of affection,  
 She is so selfe indeared,

*Virgilia* Sure I thinke so,  
 And therefore certainly it were not good,  
 She knew his loue lest sheele make sport at it.

*Hero* Why you speake truth, I neuer yet saw man,  
 How wise, how noble, yong, how rarely featured,  
 But she would spel him backward: if faire faced,  
 She would sweare the gentleman should be her sister:  
 If blacke, why Nature drawing of an antique,  
 Made a foule blot: if tall, a launce ill headed:  
 If low, an agot very vildly cut:  
 If speaking, why a vane blowne with all winds:  
 If silent, why a blocke moued with none:  
 So turnes she euery man the wrong side out,  
 And neuer giues to Truth and Vertue, that  
 Which simplenesse and merite purchaseth.

*Virgilia* Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

*Hero* No not to be so odde, and from all fashions,  
 As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable,  
 But who dare tell her so? if I should speake,  
 She would mocke me into ayre, O she would laugh me  
 Out of my selfe, presse me to death with wit,  
 Therefore let Benedicke like couerd fire,  
 Consume away in sighes, wasse inwardly:  
 It were a better death, then die with mockes,

Which

about Nothing.

III.

Which is as bad as die with tickling.

*Vrsula* Yet tel her of it, heare what she wil say.

*Hero* No rather I will go to Benedicke,  
And counsaile him to fight against his passion,  
And truly ile deuise some honest slaunders,  
To staine my cofin with, one doth not know,  
How much an ill word may impoison liking.

*Vrsula* O do not do your cofin such a wrong,  
She cannot be so much without true iudgement,  
Hauing so swift and excellent a wit,  
As she is prilde to haue, as to refuse  
So rare a gentleman as signior Benedicke.

*Hero* He is the onely man of Italy,  
Alwaies excepted my deare Claudio

*Vrsula* I pray you be not angry with me, madame,  
Speaking my fancy: signior Benedicke,  
For shape, for bearing argument and valour,  
Goes for most in report through Italy.

*Hero* Indeed he hath an excellent good name.

*Vrsula* His excellence did easne it, ere he had it:  
When are you married madame?

*Hero* Why euery day to morrow, come go in,  
Ile shew thee some attyres, and haue thy counsaile,  
Which is the best to furnish me to morrow.

*Vrsula* Shees lired I warrant you,  
We haue caught her madame.

*Hero* If it proue so, then louing goes by haps,  
Some Cupid kills with arrowes some with traps.

*Beat.* What fire is in mine eares? can this be true?  
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorne so much?

Contempt, farewell, and maiden pride, adew,  
No glory liues behind the backe of such.

And Benedicke, love on I will requite thee,  
Taming my wild heart to thy louing hand:

If thou dost loue, my kindnesse shall incite thee  
To bind our loues vp in a holy band.

For others say thou dost deserue, and I

E

Beleeue

82

86

90

94

98

102

†

106

110

114

III. i.

*Much adoe*

Beleeue it better then reportingly. exit.

*Enter Prince, Claudio, Benedicke, and Leonato.*

*Prince* I doe but stay til your mariage be consummate, and then go I toward Arragon.

*Claud.* Ile bring you thither my lord, if youe vouchsafe me.

*Prince* Nay that would be as great a foyle in the new glosse of your marriage, as to shew a child his new coate and forbid him to weare it, I wil only be bold with Benedick for his company, for from the crowne of his head, to the sole of his foot, he is al mirth, he hath twice or thrice cut Cupides bow-string, and the little hang-man dare not shoot at him, he hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinkes, his tongue speakes.

*Bene.* Gallants, I am not as I haue bin.

*Leo.* So say I, me thinkes you are sadder.

*Claudio.* I hope he be in loue.

*Prince* Hang him truant, theres no true drop of bloud in him to be truly toucht with loue, if he be sadder, he wantes money.

*Bene.* I haue the tooth-ach.

*Prince* Draw it.

*Bene.* Hang it.

*Claudio.* You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

*Prince* What? sigh for the tooth-ach.

*Leon.* Where is but a humour or a worme.

*Bene.* Wel, euery one cannot master a grieffe, but he that has it.

*Claudio.* Yet say I, he is in loue.

*Prince* There is no appeerance of fancie in him, vnlesse it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises, as to be a Dutch-man to day, a French-man to morrow, or in the shape of two countiees at once, as a Germaine from the waste downward, all stops, and a Spaniard from the hip vpward, no dublet: vnlesse he haue a fancie to this foolery, as it appeares he hath, he is no foole for fancy, as you would haue it appeare he is.

*Claudio.*

*about Nothing.*

III.ii.

*Clau.* If he be not in loue with some woman, there is no be-  
leeuing old signes, a brushes his hat a mornings, what should  
that bode?

*Prince* Hath any man seene him at the Barbers?

*Clau.* No, but the barbers man hath bin seene with him,  
and the olde ornament of his cheeke hath already stufft tennis  
balls.

*Leon.* Indeed he lookes yonger than he did, by the losse of  
a beard.

*Prince* Nay a rubs himselfe with ciuit, can you smell him  
out by that?

*Claud.* Thats as much as to say, the sweete youthe's in  
loue.

*Bene.* The greatestt note of it is his melancholy.

*Claud.* And when was he woont to wash his face?

*Prince* Yea or to paint himselfe? for the which I heare what  
they say of him.

*Claud.* Nay but his iesting spirit, which is now crept into a  
lute-string, and now gouernd by stops.

*Prince* Indeed that tells a heauy tale for him: conclude, con-  
clude, he is in loue.

*Claud.* Nay but I know who loues him.

*Prince* That would I know too, I warrant one that knows  
him not.

*Claud.* Yes, and his ill conditions, and in dispight of al, dies  
for him.

*Prince* She shall be buried with her face vppwards.

*Bene.* Yet is this no charme for the tooth-ake, old signior,  
walke aside with me, I haue studied eight or nine wise wordes  
to speake to you, which these hobby-horses must not heare.

*Prince* For my life to breake with him about Beatrice.

*Claud.* Tis euen so, Hero and Margaret haue by this play-  
ed their parts with Beatrice, and then the two beares will not  
bite one another when they meete.

*Enter Iohn the Bastard.*

*Bastard* My lord and brother, God saue you.

*Prince* Good den brother.

*Much adoe*

84 *Bastard* If your leisure seru'd, I would speake with you.

*Prince* In priuate?

88 *Bastard* If it please you, yet Count Claudio may heare, for what I would speake of, concernes him.

*Prince* Whats the matter?

92 *Bast.* Meanes your Lordship to be married to morrow?

*Prince* You know he does.

*Bast.* I know not that when he knowes what I know.

96 *Claud.* If there be any impediment, I pray you discouer it.

100 *Bast.* You may think I loue you not, let that appeare hereafter, and ayme better at me by that I now will manifest, for my brother (I thinke, he holdes you well, and in deareness of heart) hath holpe to effect your ensuing marriage: surely sute ill spent, and labor ill bestowed.

104 *Prince* Why whats the matter?

*Bast.* I came hither to tel you, and circumstances shortned, (for she has bin too long a talking of) the lady is disloyall.

108 † *Claud.* Who Hero?

*Bastar.* Euen she, Leonatoes Hero, your Hero, euery mans Hero.

*Claud.* Disloyall?

112 *Bast.* The word is too good to paint out her wickednesse, I could say she were worse, thinke you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it: wonder not till further warrant: go but with me  
116 to night you shall see her chamber window entred, euen the night before her wedding day, if you loue her, then to morow wed her: But it would better fitte your honour to change your mind.

120 *Claud.* May this be so?

*Prince* I wil not thinke it.

124 *Bast.* If you dare not trust that you see, confesse not that you knowe: if you will follow mee, I will shew you enough, and when you haue scene more, and heard more, proccede accordingly.

128 *Claudio* If I see anie thing to night, why I should not marry her to morrow in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shaine her.

*Prince*

about *Nothing*.

III.ii.

*Prince* And as I wooed for thee to obtaine her, I wil ioynē with thee, to disgrace her.

*Bastard* I will disparage her no farther, till you are my witnesses, beare it coldely but till midnight, and let the issue shew it selfe.

132 †

*Prince* O day vntowardly turned!

*Claud.* O mischiefē strangely thwarting!

*Bastard* O plague right well preuented! so will you say, when you haue scene the sequēle.

136

*Enter Dogbery and his compartner with the Watch.*

III.iii.

*Dog.* Are you good men and true?

*Verges* Yea, or else it were pittie but they should suffer faluation body and soule.

*Dog.* Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should haue any allegance in them, being chosen for the Princes watch.

4

*Verges* Well, giue them their charge, neighbour Dogbery.

8

*Dogbery* First, who thinke you the most defartlesse man to be Constable?

*Watch 1* Hugh Ote-cake fir, or George Sea-cole, for they can write and reade.

12

*Dogbery* Come hither neighbor Sea-cole. God hath blest you with a good name: to be a welsauoured man, is the gift of Fortune, but to write and reade, comes by nature.

16

*Watch 2* Both which maister Constable.

*Dogbery* You haue: I knew it would be your answer: wel, for your fauour fir, why giue God thanks, and make no boast of it, and for your writing and reading, let that appeere when there is no neede of such vanity, you are thought heere to be the most senslesse and fit man for the Constable of the watch: therefore beare you the lanthorne: this is your charge, You shall comprehend all vagrom men, you are to bidde any man stand, in the Princes name.

20

24

*Watch 2* How if a will not stand?

28

*Dogbery* Why then take no note of him, but let him goe,

*Much adoe*

and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thanke god you are ridde of a knaue.

32

*Verges* If he wil not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the Princes subiects.

† 36

*Dogbery* True, and they are to meddle with none but the Princes subiects: you shall also make no noise in the streetes: for, for the watch to babble and to talke, is most tollerable, and not to be indured.

40

*Watch* We will rather sleepe than talke, we know what belongs to a watch.

44

†

*Dogbery* Why you speake like an antient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend: one-ly haue a care that your billes bee not stolne: well, you are to cal at al the alehouses, and bid those that are drunke get them to bed.

48

*Watch* How if they will not?

*Dogbery* Why then let them alone til they are sober, if they make you not then the better answer, you may say, they are not the men you tooke them for.

52

*Watch* Well sir.

56

*Dogbery* If you meete a thiefe, you may suspect him, by vertue of your office, to be no true man: and for such kind of men, the lesse you meddle or make with them, why the more is for your honesty.

*Watch* If we know him to be a thiefe, shal we not lay hands on him?

60

*Dogbery* Truely by your office you may, but I thinke they that touch pitch will be defilde: the most peaceable way for you, if you doe take a thiefe, is, to let him shew himselfe what he is, and steale out of your companie.

64

*Verges* You haue beene alwayes called a mercifull manne, partner.

68

*Dog.* Truely I would not hang a dogge by my will, much more a man who hath anie honestie in him.

*Verges* If you heare a child crie in the night you must call to the nurse and bid her stilit.

72

*Watch* How if the nurse be asleepe and will not heare vs.

*Dog.*



*about Nothing.*

III.iii.

*Dog.* Why then depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying, for the ewe that will not heare her lamb when it baes, will neuer answer a calfe when he bleates.

*Verges* Tis very true.

*Dog.* This is the end of the charge: you constable are to present the princes owne person, if you meete the prince in the night, you may stay him.

*Verges* Nay birlady that I thinke a cannot.

*Dog.* Fiue shillings to one on't with any man that knowes the statutes, he may stay him, mary not without the prince be willing, for indeede the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

*Verges* Birlady I thinke it be so.

*Dog.* Ha ah ha, wel masters good night, and there be any matter of weight chaunces, cal vp me, keepe your fellowes counsailes, and your owne, and good night, come neighbour.

*Watch* Well masters, we heare our charge, let vs goe sitte here vppon the church bench till twoo, and then all to bed.

*Dog.* One word more, honest neighbors. I pray you watch about signior Leonatoes doore, for the wedding being there to morrow, there is a great coyle to night, adiew, be vigitant I beseech you.

*exennt.*

*Enter Borachio and Conrade.*

*Bor.* What Conrade?

*Watch* Peace, stir not.

*Bor.* Conrade I say.

*Con.* Here man, I am at thy elbow.

*Bor.* Mas and my elbow itcht, I thought there would a scabbe follow.

*Con.* I will owe thee an answer for that, and now forward with thy tale.

*Bor.* Stand thee close then vnder this penthouse, for it dristells raine, and I will, like a true drunckard, viter all to thee.

*Watch* Some treason masters, yet stand close.

*Bor.*

76

80

84

88

92

86

100

104

108

112

## Much adoe

*Bor.* Therefore know, I haue earned of Don Iohn a thousand ducates.

*Con.* Is it possible that any villanie should be so deare?

*Bor.* Thou shouldst rather aske if it were possible any villanie should be so rich? for when rich villains haue need of poore ones, poore ones may make what price they will.

*Con.* I wonder at it.

*Bor.* That shewes thou art vnconfirm'd, thou knowest that the fashion of a dublet, or a hat, or a cloake, is nothing to a man.

*Con.* Yes it is apparell.

*Bor.* I meane the fashion.

*Con.* Yes the fashion is the fashion.

*Bor.* Tush, I may as well say the foole's the foole, but see'st thou not what a deformed theefe this fashion is?

*Watch* I know that deformed, a has bin a vile theefe, this vij. yeere, a goes vp and downe like a gentle man: I remember his name.

*Bor.* Didst thou not heare some body?

*Con.* No, twas the vane on the house.

*Bor.* See'st thou not (I say) what a deformed thiefe this fashion is, how giddily a turnes about all the Hot-blounds, between foureteene and fīue and thirtie, sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoes souldiours in the rechie painting, sometime like god Bels priests in the old church window, sometime like the shauen Hercules in the smircht worm-eaten tapestry, where his cod-peece seemes as massie as his club.

*Con.* Al this I see, and I see that the fashion weares out more apparell then the man. but art not thou thy selfe giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

*Bor.* Not so neither, but know that I haue to night wooed Margaret the Lady Heroes gentle-woman, by the name of Hero, she leanes me out at her mistris chamber window, bids me a thousand times good night: I tell this tale vildly, I should first tel thee how the prince Claudio and my master planted, and placed, and possessed, by my master Don Iohn, saw a farre off

## about Nothing.

III. iii.

off in the orchard this amiable incounter.

*Conr.* And thought they Margaret was Hero?

†

*Bar.* Two of them did, the prince and Claudio, but the diuel my master knew she was Margaret, and partly by his oths, which first possess them, partly by the darke night which did deceiue them, but chiefly, by my villany, which did confirme any slander that Don Iohn had made, away went Claudio enraged, swore he would meet her as he was appointed next morning at the Temple, and there, before the whole congregation shame her, with what he saw o're night, and send her home againe without a husband.

164

168

172

*Watch 1* We charge you in the princes name stand.

176

*Watch 2* Call vpe the right maister Constable, wee haue here recouerd the most dangerous peece of lechery, that euer was knowne in the common wealth.

180

*Watch 1* And one Deformed is one of them, I know him, a weares a locke.

*Conr* Masters, masters.

184

*Watch 2* Youle be made bring deformed forth I warrant you.

*Conr* Masters, neuer speake, we charge you, let vs obey you to go with vs.

188

*Bor.* We are like to proue a goodly commoditie, being taken vp of these mens billes,

*Conr.* A commodity in question I warrant you, come weele obey you.

192

*exeunt.*

*Enter Hero, and Margaret, and Ursula.*

III. iv.

*Hero* Good Ursula wake my cosin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

*Ursula* I wil lady.

*Hero* And bid her come hither.

*Ursula* Well.

*Marg.* Troth I thinke your other rebato were better.

*Hero* No pray thee good Meg, ile weare this.

*Marg.* By my troth's not so good, and I warrant your cosin will say so.

*Hero* My cosin's a foole, and thou art another, ile weare

12

F

none

## *Much adoe*

none but this.

*Mar* I like the new tire within excellently, if the haire were a thought browner: and your gown's a most rare fashion yfaith, I saw the Dutchesse of Millaines gowne that they praise so.

*Hero* O that exceeds they say.

*Marg.* By my troth's but a night-gown it respect of yours, cloth a gold and cuts, and lac'd with siluer, set with pearles, downe sleeues, side sleeues, and skirts, round vnderborne with a blewish tinsell, but for a fine queint graceful and excelent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

*Hero* God giue me ioy to weare it, for my heart is exceeding heauy.

*Marg.* T'will be heauier soone by the weight of a man.

*Hero* Fic vpon thee, art not ashamed?

*Marg.* Of what lady? of speaking honourably? is not marriage honourable in a beggar? is not your Lord honourable without marriage? I thinke you would haue me say, sauing your reuerence a husband: & bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, ile offend no body, is there any harm in the heauier, for a husband? none I thinke, and it be the right husband, and the right wife, otherwise tis light and not heauy, aske my lady Beatrice els, here she comes.

*Enter Beatrice.*

*Hero* Good morrow coze.

*Beat.* Good morrow sweete *Hero*.

*Hero* Why how now? do you speake in the sicke tune?

*Beat.* I am out of all other tune, me thinkes.

*Mar* Clap's into Light a loue, (that goes without a burden,) do you sing it, and ile daunce it.

*Beat.* Ye Light aloue with your heels, then if your husband haue stables enough youle see he shall lacke no barnes.

*Mar.* O illegitimate construction! I scorne that with my heeles.

*Beat.* Tis almost fivie a clocke cofin, tis time you were ready, by my troth I am exceeding ill, hey ho.

*Mar.* For a hauke, a horse, or a husband?

*Beat.*

about Nothing.

*Beat.* For the letter that begins them al, H.

*Mar.* Wel, and you be not turnde Turke, theres no more sayling by the starre.

*Beat.* What meanes the foole trow?

*Mar.* Nothing I, but God send euery one their hearts desire.

*Hero.* These gloues the Counte sent me, they are an excellent perfume.

*Beat.* I am stuft cosin, I cannot smell.

*Mar.* A maide and stuft! theres goodly catchung of colde.

*Beat.* O God help me, God help me, how long haue you profest apprehension?

*Mar.* Euer since you left it, doth not my wit become me rarely?

*Beat.* It is not seene enough, you should weare it in your cap, by my troth I am sicke.

*Mar.* Get you some of this distill'd *carduus benedictus*, and lay it to your heart, it is the onely thing for a qualme.

*Hero.* There thou prickst her with a thistle.

*Beat.* *Benedictus*, why *benedictus*? you haue some moral in this *benedictus*.

*Mar.* Morall? no by my troth I haue no morall meaning, I meant plaine holy thistle, you may thinke perchance that I think you are in loue, may birlady I am not such a foole to think what I list, nor I list not to thinke what I can, nor indeed! can not think, if I would thinke my heart out of thinking, that you are in loue, or that you will be in loue, or that you can be in loue: yet *Benedicke* was such another and now is he become a man, he swore he would neuer marry, and yet now in dispight of his heart he eates his meate without grudging, and how you may be conuerted I know not, but me thinkes you looke with your eies as other women do.

*Beat.* What pace is this that thy tongue keepes?

*Marg.* Not a false gallop.

*Enter Ursula.*

*Ursula.* Madame withdraw, the prince, the Count, signiot *Benedicke*, Don Iohn, and all the gallants of the towne are

## *Much adoe*

come to fetch you to church.

*Hero* Help to dresse me good coze, good Meg, good Vrsula.

*Enter Leonato, and the Constable, and the Headborough.*

*Leonato* What would you with me, honest neighbour?

*Const. Dog.* Mary sir I would haue some confidence with you, that decernes you nearely.

*Leonato* Briefe I pray you, for you see it is a busie time with me.

*Const Dog.* Mary this it is sir.

*Headb.* Yes in truth it is sir.

*Leonato* What is it my good friends?

*Con. Do.* Goodman Verges sir speaks a little of the matter, an old man sir, and his wittes are not so blunt, as God helpe I would desire they were, but infaith honest, as the skin between liis browes.

*Head.* Yes I thank God, I am as honest as any man liuing, that is an old man, and no honeste then I.

*Const. Dog.* Comparifons are odorous, palabras, neighbour Verges.

*Leonato* Neighbors, you are tedious.

*Const. Dog.* It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poore Dukes officers, but truly for mine owne part if I were as tedious as a King I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

*Leonato* Al thy tediousnesse on me, ah?

*Const. Dog.* Yea, and't twere a thousand pound more than tis, for I heare as good exclamation on your worshippe as of any man in the citie, and though I be but a poore man, I am glad to heare it.

*Head.* And so am I.

*Leonato* I would faine know what you haue to say.

*Head.* Mary sir our watch to night, excepting your worships presence, ha tane a couple of as arrant knaues as any in Messina.

*Const. Dog.* A good old man sir, he will be talking as they say, when the age is in, the wit is out, God help vs, it is a world

to

*about Nothing.*

III.v.

to see: well said yfaith neighbour Verges, well, God's a good man, and two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind, an honest soule yfaith sir, by my troth he is, as euer broke bread, but God is to be worshipt, all men are not alike, alas good neighbour.

*Leonato* Indeed neighbour he comes too short of you.

*Const. Do.* Gifts that God giues,

*Leonato* I must leaue you.

*Const. Dog.* One word sir, our watch sir haue indeede comprehended two aspitious persons, and wee woulde haue them this morning examined before your worship.

*Leonato* Take their examination your selfe, and bring it me, I am now in great haste, as it may appeare vnto you.

*Constable* It shall be suffigance. (*exit*)

*Leonato* Drinke some wine ere you goe : fare you well.

*Messenger* My lord, they stay for you, to giue your daughter to her husband.

*Leon.* He wait vpon them, I am ready.

*Dogb.* Go good partner, goe get you to Francis Sea-cole, bid him bring his penne and inckehorne to the Gaole : we are now to examination these men.

*Verges* And we must do it wisely.

*Dogbery* We will spare for no witte I warrant you : heeres that shall driue some of them to a noncome, only get the learned writter to set downe our excommunication, and meet me at the Iaile.

*Enter Prince, Bastard, Leonato, Frier, Claudio, Benedicke, Hero, and Beatrice.*

IV.i.

*Leonato* Come Frier Francis be briefe, onely to the plaine forme of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

*Fran.* You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady.

*Claudio* No.

*Leo* To bee married to her : Frier, you come to marry her.

*Frier* Lady, you come hither to be married to this counte.

*Hero* I do.

*Frier* If either of you know any inward impediment why

*Much adoe*

you should not be conioyned, I charge you on your soules to viter it.

*Claudio* Know you any, Hero?

*Hero* None my lord.

*Frier* Know you any, Counte?

*Leonato* I dare make his answer, None.

*Clau.* O what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do, not knowing what they do!

*Bene.* Howe nowe! interiections? why then, some be of laughing, as, ah, ha, he.

*Claudio* Stand thee by Frier, father, by your leaue, Will you with free and vnconstrained soule Giue me this maide your daughter?

*Leonata* As freely sonne as God did giue her mee.

*Claudio* And what haue I to giue you backe whose woorth May counterpoise this rich and pretious gift?

*Princen* Nothing, vnlesse you render her againe.

*Claudio* Sweete Prince, you learne me noble thankfulness: There Leonato, take her backe againe, Giue not this rotten orange to your friend, Shee's but the signe and semblance of her honor: Behold how like a maide she blushes heere!

O what authoritie and shew of truth Can cunning sinne couer it selfe withall! Comes not that blood, as modest euidence, To witnesse simple Vertue? would you not sweare All you that see her, that she were a maide, By these exterior shewes? But she is none: She knowes the heate of a luxurious bed: Her blush is guiltinesse, not modestie.

*Leonato* What do you meane my lord?

*Claudio* Not to be married, Not to knit my soule to an approoued wanton.

*Leonato* Deere my lord, if you in your owne prooffe, Haue vanquisht the resistance of her youth, And made defeate of her virginittie.

*Claudio* I know what you would say: if I haue knowne her,  
You



*about Nothing.*

IV. i.

You will say, she did embrace me as a husband,  
And so extenuate the forehead sinne: No Leonato,  
I neuer tempted her with word too large,  
But as a brother to his sister, shewed  
Bashfull sinceritie, and comelie loue.

*Hero* And seemde I euer otherwise to you?

*Claudio* Out on thee seeming, I wil write against it,  
You seeme to me as Diane in her Orbe,  
As chaste as is the budde ere it be blowne:  
But you are more intemperate in your blood,  
Than Venus, or those pampred animalls,  
That rage in sauage sensualiitie.

*Hero* Is my Lord well that he doth speake so wide?

*Leonato* Sweete prince, why speake not you?

*Prince* What should I speake?

I stand dishonourd that haue gone about,  
To lincke my deare friend to a common stale.

*Leonato* Are these things spoken, or do I but dreame?

*Bastard* Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

*Bened.* This lookes not like a nuptiall.

*Hero* True, O God!

*Claud.* Leonato, stand I here?

Is this the prince? is this the princes brother?

Is this face Heroes? are our eyes our owne?

*Leonato* All this is so, but what of this my Lord?

*Claud.* Let me but moue one question to your daughter,  
And by that fatherly and kindly power,  
That you haue in her, bid her answer truly.

*Leonato* I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

*Hero* O God defend me how am I beset,  
What kind of catechising call you this?

*Claud.* To make you answer truly to your name.

*Hero* Is it not Hero, who can blot that name  
With any iust reproch?

*Claud.* Mary that can Hero,

Hero it selfe can blot out Heroes vertue.

What man was he talkt with you yesternight,  
Out at your window betwixt twelue and one?

Now

*Much adoe*

Now if you are a maide, answer to this.

*Hero* I talkt with no man at that hower my lord.

†  
30  
94  
*Prince* Why then are you no maiden. *Leonato*,  
I am fory you must heare: vpon mine honor,  
My selfe, my brother, and this griued Counte  
Did see her, heare her, at that howre last night,  
Talke with a ruffian at her chamber window,  
Who hath indeede most like a liberall villaine,  
Confest the vile encounters they haue had  
A thousand times in secret.

†  
98  
*John* Fie, fie, they are not to be named my lord,  
Not to be spoke of,  
There is not chastitie enough in language,  
Without offence to vtter them: thus pretty lady,  
I am fory for thy much misgouernement.

102  
106  
*Claud.* O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou bin,  
If halfe thy outward graces had bin placed,  
About thy thoughts and counsailes of thy heart?  
But fare thee well, most foule, most faire, farewell  
Thou pure impietie, and impious puritie,  
For thee ile locke vp all the gates of Loue,  
And on my eie-liddes shall Coniecture hang,  
To turne all beautie into thoughts of harme,  
And neuer shall it more be gracious.

110  
*Leonato* Hath no mans dagger here a point for me.

*Beatrice* Why how now cosin, wherfore sinke you downe?

*Bastard* Come let vs go: these things come thus to light,  
Smother her spirits vp.

114  
*Benedicke* How doth the Lady?

*Beatrice* Dead I thinke, help vncke,  
Hero, why Hero, vncke, signior Benedicke, Frier.

*Leonato* O Fate! take not away thy heauy hand,  
Death is the fairest couer for her shame  
118  
That may be wisht for.

*Beatrice* How now cosin Hero?

*Frier* Haue comfort lady.

*Leonato* Dost thou looke vp?

*about Nothing.*

IV.i.

*Frier* Yea, wherefore should she not?

*Leonato* Wherefore? why doth not euery earthly thing,  
 Cry shame vpon her? could she here deny  
 The story that is printed in her blood?  
 Do not liue Hero, do not ope thine eies:  
 For did I thinke thou wouldst not quickly die,  
 Thought I thy spirites were stronger than thy shames,  
 My selfe would on the rereward of reproches  
 Strike at thy life. Griued I I had but one?  
 Chid I for that at frugall Natures frame?  
 O one too much by thee: why had I one?  
 Why euer wast thou louely in my eies?  
 Why had I not with charitable hand,  
 Tooke vp a beggars issue at my gates,  
 Who sinirched thus, and mired with infamy,  
 I might haue said, no part of it is mine,  
 This shame deriues it selfe from vnknowne loynes,  
 But mine and mine I loued, and mine I praisde,  
 And mine that I was prouwd on mine so much,  
 That I my selfe, was to my selfe not mine:  
 Valewing of her, why she, O she is false,  
 Into a pit of incke, that the wide sea  
 Hath drops too few to wash her cleane againe,  
 And salt too little, which may season giue  
 To her foule tainted flesh.

122

126

†

130

134

†

138

142

*Ben.* Sir, sir, be patient, for my part I am so attired in wonder, I know not what to say.

146

*Beat.* O on my foule my cofin is belied.

*Bene.* Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?

*Beat.* No truly, not although vntill last night,  
 I haue this tweluemonth bin her bedfellow.

150

*Leon.* Confirmd, confirmd, O that is stronger made,  
 Which was before bard vp with ribs of yron,  
 Would the two princes lie, and Claudio lie,  
 Who loued her so, that speaking of her foulness,  
 Washt it with teares! hence from her, let her die.

154†

*Frier* Heare me a little, for I haue only bin silent so long, &  
 giuen way vnto this course of fortune, by noting of the lady, I  
 haue markt,

158

G

A

160

*Much adoe*

A thousand blushing apparitions,  
 To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames,  
 In angel whitenesse beate away those blushes,  
 And in her eie there hath appeared a fire,  
 To burne the errors that these princes hold  
 Against her maiden truth: call me a foole,  
 Trust not my reading, nor my obseruations,  
 Which with experimental seale doth warrant  
 The tenure of my booke: trust not my age,  
 My reuerence, calling, nor diuinitie,  
 If this sweete ladie lie not guiltlesse here,  
 Vnder some biting error,

*Leonato* Frier, it cannot be,

Thou seest that al the grace that she hath left,  
 Is, that she will not adde to her damnation,  
 A sinne of periury, she not denies it:  
 Why seekest thou then to couer with excuse,  
 That which appeares in proper nakednesse?

*Frier* Lady, what man is he you are accusde of?

*Hero* They know that do accuse me, I know none,  
 If I know more of any man aliue  
 Then that which maiden modesty doth warrant,  
 Let all my finnes lacke mercie, O my father,  
 Proue you that any man with me conuerst,  
 At houres vnnieete, or that I yesternight  
 Maintained the change of words with any creature,  
 Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.

*Frier* There is some strange misprision in the princes.

*Bene.* Two of them haue the very bent of honour,  
 And if their wisdomes be misled in this,  
 The practife of it liues in Iohn the Bastard,  
 Whose spirites toyle in frame of villanies.

*Leonato* I know not, if they spcake but truth of her,  
 These hands shall teare her, if they wrong her honour,  
 The proudest of them shal wel heare of it.  
 Time hath not yet so dried this bloud of mine,  
 Nor age so eate vp my inuention,

*about Nothing.*

IV.i.

Nor Fortune made such hauocke of my meanes,  
 Nor my bad life rest me so much of friends,  
 But they shall find awakte in such a kind,  
 Both strength of limbe, and policy of mind,  
 Ability in meanes, and choise of friends,  
 To quit me of them throughly.

198

202

*Frier* Pawse awhile,  
 And let my counsell sway you in this case,  
 Your daughter here the princeesse (left for dead,)  
 Let her awhile be secretly kept in,  
 And publish it, that she is dead indeede,  
 Maintaine a mourning ostentation,  
 And on your families old monument,  
 Hang mourneful epitaphes, and do all rites,  
 That appertaine vnto a buriall.

206

210

*Leon.* What shall become of this? what will this do?

*Frier* Mary this well caried, shall on her behalfe,,  
 Change slaunder to remorse, that is some good,  
 But not for that dreame I on this strange course,  
 But on this trauaile looke for greater birth:  
 She dying, as it must be so maintaine,  
 Vpon the instant that she was accusde,  
 Shall be lamented, pittied, and excusde  
 Of euery hearer: for it so falls out,  
 That what we haue, we prize not to the worth,  
 Whiles we enioy it, but being lackt and lost,  
 Why then we racke the valed, then we find  
 The vertue that possession would not shew vs  
 Whiles it was ours, so will it fare with Claudio:  
 When hee shall heare she died vpon his words,  
 Th Idæa of her life shall sweetly creepe,  
 Into his study of imagination,  
 And every louely Organ of her life,  
 Shall come apparell'd in more precious habite,  
 More moouing delicate, and full of life,  
 Into the eie and prospect of his soule  
 Then when she liude indeed: then shall he mourne,

214

218

222

226

230

*Muchadoe*

If euer loue had interest in his liuer,  
 And with he had not so accused her:  
 No, though he thought his accusation true:  
 Let this be so, and doubt not but successe  
 Will fashion the euent in better shape,  
 Then I can lay it downe in likelihood.  
 But if all ayme but this be leuelld false,  
 The supposition of the ladies death,  
 Will quench the wonder of her infamie.  
 And if it fort not wel, you may conceale her,  
 As best befits her wounded reputation,  
 In some reclusiue and religious life,  
 Out of all eies, tongues, minds, and iniuries.

*Bene.* Signior Leonato, let the Frier aduise you,  
 And though you know my inwardnesse and loue  
 Is very much vnto the prince and Claudio,  
 Yet, by mine honor, I will deale in this,  
 As secretly and iustly as your soule  
 Should with your body.

*Leon.* Being that I flow in griefe,  
 The smallest twine may leade me.

*Frier* Tis wel consented, presently away,  
 Forto strange sores, strangely they straine the cure,  
 Come lady, die to liue, this wedding day  
 Perhaps is but prolong'd, haue patience and endure. *exit.*

*Bene.* Lady Beatrice, haue you wept al this while?

*Beat.* Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

*Bene.* I will not desire that.

*Beat.* You haue no reason, I do it freely.

*Bene.* Surely I do beleeeue your faire cosin is wronged.

*Beat.* Ah, how much might the man deserue of me that  
 would right her!

*Bene.* Is there any way to shew such friendship?

*Beat.* A very euen way, but no such friend.

*Bene.* May a man do it?

*Beat.* It is a mans office, but not yours.

*Bene.* I doe loue nothing in the worlde so well as you,

*about Nothing.*

IV.i.

is not that strange?

*Beat.* As strange as the thing I knowe not, it were as possible for me to say, I loued nothing so wel as you, but belue me not, and yet I lie not, I confesse nothing, nor I deny nothing, I am sory for my coosin.

*Bened.* By my sword Beatrice, thou louest me.

*Beat.* Do not sweare and eate it.

*Bened.* I will sweare by it that you loue me, and I wil make him eate it that faves I loue not you.

*Beat.* Will you not eate your word?

*Bened.* With no sawce that can be deuised to it, I protest I loue thee.

*Beat.* Why then God forgiue me.

*Bened.* VVhat offence sweete Beatrice?

*Beat.* You haue stayed me in a happy houre, I was about to protest I loued you.

*Bened.* And do it with all thy heart.

*Beat.* I loue you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest.

*Bened.* Come bid me doe any thing for thee.

*Beat.* Kill Claudio.

*Bened.* Ha, not for the wide world.

*Beat.* You kill me to deny it, farewell.

*Bened.* Tarry sweete Beatrice.

*Beat.* I am gone, though I am here, there is no loue in you, nay I pray you let me go.

*Bened.* Beatrice.

*Beat.* In faith I will go.

*Bened.* VVeele be friends first.

*Beat.* You dare easier be friends with mee, than fight with mine enemy.

*Bened.* Is Claudio thine enemy?

*Beat.* Is a not approoued in the height a villaine, that hath flandered, scorned, dishonored my kinswoman? O that I were a man! what, beare her in hand, vntill they come to take handes, and then with publike accusation vncouerd flander, vnmittigated rancour? O God that I were a man! I woulde

IV.i.

*Muchadoe*

eate his heart in the market place.

*Bened.* Heare me Beatrice.

312

*Beat.* Talke with a man out at a window, a proper saying.

*Bened.* Nay but Beatrice.

*Beat.* Sweete Hero, she is wrongd, she is slaundred, shee is vndone.

316

*Bened.* Beat?

†

320

*Beat.* Princes and Counties! surely a princely testimonie, a goodly Counte, Counte Comfekt, a sweete Gallant surely, O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend woulde be a man for my sake! But manhoode is melted into curfies, valour into complement, and men are only turnd into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tels a lie, and sweares it: I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieuing.

324

328

*Bened.* Tarry good Beatrice, by this hand I loue thee.

*Beatrice* Use it for my loue some other way than swearing by it.

332

*Bened.* Thinke you in your soule the Count Claudio hath wrongd Hero?

*Beatrice* Yea, as sure as I haue a thought, or a soule.

† 336

*Bened.* Enough, I am engagde, I will challenge him, I will kisse your hand, and so I leaue you: by this hand, Claudio shal render me a deere account: as you heare of me, so think of me: goe comforte your coosin, I must say she is dead, and so farewell.

IV.ii.

*Enter the Constables, Borachio, and the Towne clearke  
in gownes.*

*Keeper* Is our whole dislemby appeard?

*Cowley* O a stoole and a cushion for the Sexton.

*Sexton* Which be the malefactors?

4

*Andrew* Mary that am I, and my partner.

*Cowley* Nay thats certaine, we haue the exhibition to examine.

8

*Sexton* But which are the offenders? that are to be examined, let them come before maister constable.

*Kemp* Yea mary, let them come before mee, what is your name,



## about Nothing.

IV.ii.

name, friend?

*Bor.* Borachio.

*Ke.* Pray write downe Borachio. Yours sirra.

*Con.* I am a gentleman sir, and my name is Conrade.

*Ke.* Write downe maister gentleman Conrade: maisters, do you serue God?

*Both* Yea sir we hope.

*Kemp.* Write downe, that they hope they serue God: and write God first, for God defend but God shoulde goe before such villaines: maisters, it is prooued alreadie that you are little better than false knaues, and it will go neere to be thought so shortly, how answer you for your selues?

*Con.* Mary sir we say, we are none.

*Kemp* A maruellous witty fellowe I assure you, but I will go about with him: come you hither sirra, a word in your eare sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaues.

*Bor.* Sir, I say to you, we are none.

*Kemp* VVel, stand aside, fore God they are both in a tale: haue you writ downe, that they are none?

*Sexton* Master constable, you go not the way to examine, you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

*Kemp* Yea mary, thats the esteest way, let the watch come forth: masters, I charge you in the Princes name accuse these men.

*Watch 1* This man said sir, that don Iohn the Princes brother was a villaine.

*Kemp* Write downe, prince Iohn a villaine: why this is flat periurie, to call a Princes brother villaine.

*Borachio* Maister Constable.

*Kemp* Pray thee fellowe peace, I doe not like thy looke I promise thee.

*Sexton* VVhat heard you him say else?

*Watch 2* Mary that he had receiued a thousand duckats of don Iohn, for accusing the Ladie Hero wrongfully.

*Kemp* Flat burglarie as euer was committed.

*Const.* Yea by masse that it is.

*Sexton* VVhat else fellowe?

*Watch*

12

16

20

24

28

32

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40

44

48

52

†

## IV.ii.

*Much adoe*

*Watch* † And that Counte Claudio did meane vppon his  
56 wordes, to disgrace Hero before the whole assemblie, and not  
marrie her.

*Kemp* O villaine! thou wilt be condemnd into euerlasting  
redemption for this.

*Sexton* V What else? *Watch* This is all.

*Sexton* And this is more masters then you can deny, prince  
60 Iohn is this morning secretlie stolne awaie : Hero was in this  
64 manner accusde, in this verie manner refusde, and vppon the  
griefe of this sodainlie died : Maister Constable, let these men  
† be bound, and brought to Leonatoes, I will goe before and  
68 shew him their examination.

*Constable* Come let them be opiniond.

*Couley* Let them be in the hands of Coxcombe.

*Kemp* Gods my life, wheres the Sexton? let him write down  
72 the Princes officer Coxcombe: come, bind them, thou naugh-  
ty varlet.

*Couley* Away, you are an asse, you are an asse.

*Kemp* Dooft thou not suspect my place? dooft thou not  
76 suspect my yeeres? O that he were here to write me downe an  
asse! but maisters, remember that I am an asse, though it bee  
80 not written downe, yet forget not that I am an asse: No thou  
villaine, thou art full of pietie as shal be proude vpon thee by  
84 good witnes, I am a wise fellow, and which is more, an officer,  
and which is more, a housholder, and which is more, as pret-  
† ty a peece off flesh as anie is in Messina, and one that knowes  
the Law, goe to, and a rich fellow enough, go to, and a fellow  
88 that hath had losses, and one that hath two gownes. and euery  
thing handsome about him: bring him away: O that I had bin  
writ downe an asse! *exit.*

## V.i.

*Enter Leonato and his brother.*

*Brother* If you go on thus, you will kill your selfe,  
And tis not wisdomes thus to second griefe,  
Against your selfe.

*Leonato* I pray thee cease thy counsaile,  
4 Which falles into mine eares as profitlesse,  
As water in a syue: giue not me counsaile,

Nor

*about Nothing.*

V.i.

Nor let no comforter delight mine eare,  
 But such a one whose wrongs doe sute with mine.  
 Bring me a father that so lou'd his child,  
 Whose ioy of her is ouer-whelmd like mine,  
 And bid him speake of patience,  
 Measure his woe the length and bredth of mine,  
 And let it answer euery straine for straine,  
 As thus for thus, and such a griefe for such,  
 In euery lineament, branch, thape, and forme:  
 If such a one will smile and stroke his beard,  
 And sorrow, wagge, crie hem, when he should grone,  
 Patch griefe with prouerbes, make misfortune drunke,  
 With candle-wasters: bring him yet to me,  
 And I of him will gather patience:  
 But there is no such man, for brother, men  
 Can counsaile and speake comfort to that griefe,  
 Which they themselues not feele, but tasting it,  
 Their counsaile turnes to passion, which before,  
 Would giue preceptuall medicine to rage,  
 Fetter strong madnesse in a silken thred,  
 Charme ach with ayre, and agony with words,  
 No, no, tis all mens office, to speake patience  
 To those that wring vnder the loade of sorrow  
 But no mans vertue nor sufficiencie  
 To be so morall, when he shall endure  
 The like himselfe: therefore giue me no counsaile,  
 My griefes crie lowder then aduertisement.  
*Brother* Therein do men from children nothing differ.  
*Leonato* I pray thee peace, I wil be flesh and blood,  
 For there was neuer yet Philosopher,  
 That could endure the tooth-ake patiently,  
 How euer they haue writ the stile of gods,  
 And made a push at chance and sufferance.  
*Brother* Yet bend not all the harme vpon your selfe,  
 Make those that do offend you, suffer too.  
*Leonato* There thou speakest reason, nay I will do so,  
 My soule doth tell me, Hero is belied,

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And

*Much adoe*

And that shall Claudio know, so shall the prince,  
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

*Enter Prince and Claudio.*

*Brother* Here comes the Prince and Claudio hastily.

*Prince* Good den, good den.

*Claudio* Good day to both of you.

*Leonato* Heare you my Lords?

*Prince* We haue some haste Leonato.

*Leonato* Some haste my lord! well, fare you well my lord,  
Are you so hasty now? well, all is one.

*Prince* Nay do not quarrel with vs, good old man.

*Brother* If he could right himselfe with quarrelling,  
Some of vs would lie low.

*Claudio* Who wrongs him?

*Leona.* Mary thou dost wrong me, thou dissembler, thou:  
Nay, neuer lay thy hand vpon thy sword,  
I feare thee not.

*Claudio* Mary beshrew my hand,  
If it should giue your age such cause of feare,  
Infaieth my hand meant nothing to my sword.

*Leonato* Tush, tush man, neuer fleere and iest at me,  
I speake not like a dotard, nor a foole,  
As vnder priuiledge of age to bragge,  
What I haue done being yong, or what would doe,  
Were I not old, know Claudio to thy head,  
Thou hast so wrongd mine innocent child and me,  
That I am forst to lay my reuerence by,  
And with grey haire and bruise of many daies,  
Do challenge thee to triall of a man,  
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child.

Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,  
And she lies buried with her ancestors:  
O in a toomb where neuer scandal slept,  
Saue this of hers, framde by thy villanie.

*Claudio* My villany?

*Leonato* Thine Claudio, thine I say.

*Prince* You say not right old man.

*Leonato*

*about Nothing.*

V.i.

*Leonato* My Lord, my Lord,  
He prooue it on his body if he dare,  
Dispight his nice fence, and his actiue practise,  
His Maie of youth, and bloome of lustihood.

*Claudio* Away, I will not haue to doe with you.

*Leonato* Canst thou so daffe me? thou hast kild my child,  
If thou kilst me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

*Brother* He shal kill two of vs, and men indeed,  
But thats no matter, let him kill one first:  
Win me and weare me, let him answer me,  
Come follow me boy, come sir boy, come follow me  
Sir boy, ile whip you from your foyning fence,  
Nay, as I am a gentleman I, will.

*Leonato* Brother.

*Brother* Content your self, God knowes, I loued my necce,  
And she is dead, slanderd to death by villaines,  
That dare as well answer a man indeed,  
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue,  
Boyes, apes, braggarts, Iackes, milke-sops.

*Leonato* Brother Anthony.

*Brother* Hold you content, what man! I know them, yea  
And what they weigh, euen to the vtmost scruple,  
Scambling, out-facing, fashion-monging boies,  
That lie, and cogge, and flout, depraue, and slaunder,  
Go antiquely, and shew outward hidioussnesse,  
And speake of halfe a dozen dang'rous words,  
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst,  
And this is all.

*Leonato* But brother Anthonie

*Brother* Come tis no matter,  
Do not you meddle, let me deale in this.

*Prince* Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience,  
My heart is sory for your daughters death:  
But on my honour she was chargde with nothing  
But what was true, and very full of prooffe.

*Leonato* My Lord, my Lord.

*Prince* I will not heare you.

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*Much adoe*

*Leo.* No come brother, away, I wil be heard. *Exeunt amb.*

*Bro.* And shal, or some of vs wil smart for it. *Enter Bened.*

110 *Prince* See see, heere comes the man we went to seeke.

*Claud.* Now signior, what newes?

*Bened.* Good day my Lord:

114 *Prince* Welcome signior, you are almost come to parte almost a fray.

*Claud.* Wee had likt to haue had our two noses snapt off with two old men without tecth.

118 *Prince* Leonato and his brother what thinkst thou? had we fought, I doubt we should haue benee too yong for them.

*Bened.* In a false quarrell there is no true valour, I came to seeke you both.

122 *Claud.* We haue benee vp and downe to seeke thee, for we are high prooffe melancholie, and would faine haue it beaten away, wilt thou vse thy wit?

*Bened.* It is in my scabberd, shal I drawe it?

126 *Prince* Doeest thou weare thy wit by thy side?

*Claud.* Neuer any did so, though very many haue been beside their wit, I will bid thee drawe, as wee doe the minstrels, draw to pleasure vs.

130 *Prince* As I am an honest man he lookes pale, art thou sicke, or angry?

134 *Claud.* What courage man: what though care kild a catte, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

*Bened.* Sir, I shall meete your wit in the careere, and you charge it against me, I pray you chuse another subiect

138 *Claud.* Nay then giue him another staffe, this last was broke crosse.

*Prince* By this light he chaunges more and more, I thinke he be angry indeed.

142 *Claud.* If he be, he knowes how to turne his girdle.

*Bened.* Shall I speake a word in your eare?

*Claud.* God bleffe me from a challenge.

146 *Bened.* You are a villaine, I least not, I will make it good howe you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare: doo mee right, or I will protest your cowardise: you haue kild a sweete

## about Nothing.

V.i.

sweete Lady, and her death shall fall heanie on you, let me heare from you.

*Claud.* Well I wil meet you, so I may haue good cheare.

*Prince* What, a feast, a feast?

*Claud.* I faith I thanke him he hath bid me to a calues head & a capon, the which if I doe not carue most curiously, say my kniffe's naught, shall I not find a woodcocke too?

*Bened.* Sir your wit ambles well, it goes casily.

*Prince* He tell thee how Beatrice praisd thy witte the other day: I said thou hadst a fine witte, true said she, a fine little one: no said I, a great wit: right saies she, a great grosse one: nay said I, a good wit, iust said she, it hurts no body: nay said I, the gentleman is wise: certaine said she, a wise gentleman: nay said I, he hath the tongues: that I belecue said shee, for he swore a thing to mee on munday night, which hee forswore on tuesday morning, theres a double tongue theirs two tongues, thus did shee an houre together transhape thy particular vertues, yet at last she cōcluded with a sigh, thou wast the properst man in Italy.

*Claud.* For the which shee wept heartily and saide she cared not.

*Prince* Yea that she did, but yet for all that, and if she did not hate him deadly, she would loue him dearely, the old mans daughter told vs all.

*Claud.* All all, and moreouer, God sawe him when he was hid in the garden.

*Prince* But when shall we set the sauage bulles hornes one the sensible Benedicks head?

*Claud.* Yea and text vnder-neath, here dwells Benedick the married man.

*Bened.* Fare you wel, boy, you know my minde, I wil leaue you now to your gossef-like humor, you breake iests as brag-gards do their blades, which God be thanked hurt not: my Lord, for your many courtisies I thanke you, I must discontinue your company, your brother the bastard is fled from Messina: you haue among you, kild a sweet and innocent lady: for my Lord Lacke-beard, there hee and I shal meet, and till then peace be with him,

H 3

Prince

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*Much adoe*

*Prince* He is in earnest.

*Claudio* In most profound earnest, and ile warrant you, for the loue of Beatrice.

200 *Prince* And hath challengde thee.

*Claudio* Most sincerely.

204 *Prince* What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his dublet and hose, and leaues off his wit!

*Enter Constables, Conrade, and Borachio.*

*Claudio* He is then a Giant to an Ape, but then is an Ape a Doctor to such a man.

208 *Prince* But soft you, let me be, plucke vp my heart, and be sad, did he not say my brother was fled?

212 *Const.* Come you sir, if iustice cannot tame you, she shall nere weigh more reasons in her ballance, nay, and you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be lookt to.

*Prince* How now, two of my brothers men bound? Borachio one.

216 *Claudio* Hearken after their offence my Lord.

*Prince* Officers, what offence haue these men done?

220 *Const.* Mary sir, they haue committed false report, moreouer they haue spoken vntruths, secondarily they are slanders, sixt and lastly, they haue belyed a Lady, thirdly they haue verefied vniust thinges, and to conlude, they are lying knaues.

224 *Prince.* First I aske thee what they haue done, thirdly I ask thee whats their offence, sixt and lastly why they are committed, and to conlude, what you lay to their charge.

228 *Claud.* Rightly reasoned, and in his owne diuision, and by my troth theres one meaning wel suted.

232 *Prince* Who haue you offended maisters, that you are thus bound to your answere? this learned Constable is too cunning to be vnderstood, whats your offence?

236 *Bor.* Sweete prince, let me goe no farther to mine answere: do you heare me, and let this Counte kill me: I haue deceiued euen your very eyes: what your wisedomes could not discouer, these shallowe fooles haue broght to light, who in the night ouerheard me confessing to this man, how Don Iohn your brother incensed me to slaunder the Lady Hero, howe you were brought

240



*about Nothing.*

V.i.

brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Heroes garments, how you disgracde hir when you should marry hir: my villany they haue vpon record, which I had rather seale with my death, then repeate ouer to my shame: the lady is dead vpon mine and my masters false accusation: and briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villaine.

*Prince* Runnes not this speech like yron through your blood?

*Claud.* I haue dronke poison whiles he vtterd it.

*Prince.* But did my brother set thee on to this?

*Bor.* Yea, and paid me richly for the practife of it.

*Prince* He is composde and framde of treacherie,  
And fled he is vpon this villanie.

*Claud.* Sweet Hero, now thy image doth appeare  
In the rare semblance that I lou'd it first,

*Const.* Come, bring away the plaintiffes, by this time our sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter: and masters, do not forget to specifie when time and place shal serue, that I am an asse.

*Con. 2* Here, here comes master Signior Leonato, and the sexton too.

*Enter Leonato, his brother, and the Sexton.*

*Leonato* Which is the villaine? let me see his cies,  
That when I note another man like him,  
I may auoide him: which of these is he?

*Bor.* If you would know your wronger, looke on me.

*Leonato* Art thou the slaue that with thy breath hast killd  
Mine innocent child?

*Bor.* Yea, euen I alone.

*Leo.* No, not so villaine, thou beliefst thy selfe,  
Here stand a paire of honourable men,  
A third is fled that had a hand in it:  
I thanke you Princes for my daughters death,  
Record it with your high and worthy deeds,  
'T was brauely done, if you bethinke you of it.

*Claud.* I know not how to pray your pacience,  
Yet I must speake, choose your reuenge your selfe,

Impose

Vi.

*Much adoe*

Impose me to what penance your inuention  
 Can lay vpon my sinne, yet sinnd I not,  
 But in mistaking.

284

*Prince* By my soule nor I,  
 And yet to fatisfie this good old man,  
 I would bend vnder any heavy waight,  
 That heele enioyne me to.

288

*Leonato* I cannot bid you bid my daughter liue,  
 That were impossible, but I pray you both,  
 Possesse the people in Messina here,  
 How innocent she died, and if your loue  
 Can labour aught in sad inuention,  
 Hang her an epitaph vpon her toomb,  
 And sing it to her bones, sing it to night:  
 To morrow morning come you to my house,  
 And since you could not be my son in law,  
 Be yet my nephew: my brother hath a daughter,  
 Almost the copie of my child thats dead,  
 And she alone is heyre to both of vs,  
 Giue her the right you should haue giu'n her cosin,  
 And so dies my reuenge.

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*Claudio* O noble sir!

Your ouer kindnesse doth wring teares from me,  
 I do embrace your offer and dispose,  
 For henceforth of poore Claudio.

304

*Leonato* To morrow then I wil expect your comming,  
 To night I take my leaue, this naughty man  
 Shal face to face be brought to Margaret,  
 Who I belecue was packt in al this wrong,  
 Hyred to it by your brother.

308

*Bor.* No by my soule she was not,  
 Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,  
 But alwayes hath bin iust and vertuous,  
 In any thing that I do know by her.

312

*Const.* Moreouer sir, which indeede is not vnder white and  
 blacke, this plaintiffe heere, the offendour, did call me asse, I  
 beseech you let it be remembred in his punishment, and also  
 the

316

*about Nothing.*

V.i.

the watch heard them talke of one Deformed, they say he weares a key in his eare and a locke hanging by it, and borows monie in Gods name, the which he hath vsde so long, & neuer paied, that now men grow hard-hearted and wil lend nothing for Gods sake: praie you examine him vpon that point.

320

*Leonato* I thanke thee for thy care and honest paines.

*Const.* Your worship speakes like a most thankful and reuerent youth, and I praise God for you.

324

*Leon.* Theres for thy paines.

*Const.* God saue the foundation.

*Leon.* Goe, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thanke thee.

328

*Const.* I leaue an arrant knaue with your worship, which I beseech your worship to correct your selfe, for the example of others: God keepe your worship, I wish your worship well, God restore you to health, I humble giue you leaue to depart and if a merie meeting may be wisht, God prohibite it: come neighbour.

332

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*Leon.* Vntill to morrow morning, Lords, farewell.

*Brot.* Farewell my lords, we looke for you to morrow.

*Prince* We will not faile.

*Claud.* To night ile mourne with Hero.

*Leonato* Bring you these fellowes on, weel talke with Margaret, how her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow. *exennt*

340

*Enter Benedicke and Margaret.*

V.ii.

*Bened.* Praie thee sweete mistris Margaret, deserue well at my hands, by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

*Mar.* Wil you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beautie?

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*Bene.* In so high a stile Margaret, that no man liuing shall come ouer it, for in most comely truth thou deseruest it.

8

*Mar.* To haue no man come ouer me, why shal I alwaies keep below staires.

*Bene.* Thy wit is as quicke as the grey-hounds mouth, it catches.

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*Mar.* And your's, as blunt as the Fencers foiles, which hit, but hurt not.

I

Bene.

*Much adoe*

16 *Bene.* A most manly witte Margaret, it will not hurt a woman: and so I pray thee call Beatrice, I giue thee the bucklers.

*Marg.* Giue vs the swordes, wee haue bucklers of our owne.

20 *Bene.* If you vse them Margaret, you must putte in the pikes with a vice, and they are daungerous weapons for maides.

24 *Marg.* Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I thinke hath legges. *Exit Margaritha.*

28 *Bene.* And therefore wil come. The God of loue that sits  
 † 32 aboute, and knowes mee, and knowes me, how pittifull I deserue. I meane in singing, but in louing, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first imploier of pandars, and a whole  
 † 36 booke full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet runne smoothly in the euen rode of a blancke verse, why they were neuer so truly turnd ouer and ouer as my poore selfe  
 † in loue: mary I cannot shew it in rime, I haue tried, I can finde  
 † out no rime to Ladie but babie, an innocent rime: for scorne,  
 † 40 horne, a hard rime: for schoole foole, a babling rime: very ominous endings, no, I was not borne vnder a riming plannet,  
 † nor I cannot wooe in festiuall termes: sweete Beatrice wouldst thou come when I cald thee?

*Enter Beatrice.*

44 *Beat.* Yea signior, and depart when you bid me.

*Bene.* O stay but till then.

48 *Beat.* Then, is spoken: fare you wel now, and yet ere I goe, let me goe with that I came, which is, with knowing what hath past betweene you and Claudio.

*Bene.* Onely foule words, and therevpon I will kisse thee.

52 *Beat.* Foule words is but foule wind, and foule wind is but foule breath, and foule breath is noisome, therefore I wil depart vnkist.

56 *Bene.* Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sence, so forcible is thy wit, but I must tel thee plainly, Claudio vndergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly heare from him, or I will subscribe him a coward, and I pray thee now tell me,  
 for

*about Nothing.*

V.ii.

for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in loue with me?

*Beat.* For them all together, which maintaine so politique a state of euil, that they will not admitte any good part to intermingle with them: but for which of my good parts did you first suffer loue for me?

*Bene.* Suffer loue! a good epithite, I do suffer loue indeed, for I loue thee against my will.

*Beat.* In spight of your heart I thinke, alas poore heart, if you spight it for my sake, I will spight it for yours, for I wil neuer loue that which my friend hates.

*Bene.* Thou and I are too wise to wooe peaceably.

*Beat.* It appears not in this confession, theres not one wise man among twentie that will praise himselfe.

*Bene.* An old, an old instance Beatrice, that liu'd in the time of good neighbours, if a man do not erect in this age his owne tomb ere he dies, he shall liue no longer in monument, then the bell rings, and the widow weepes.

*Beat.* And how long is that thinke you?

*Bene.* Question, why an hower in clamour and a quarter in rhexme, therefore is it most expedient for the wise, if Don worne (his conscience) find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his owne vertues, as I am to my selfe so much for praising my selfe, who I my selfe will beare witnes is praise worthie, and now tell me, how doth your cosin?

*Beat.* Verie ill.

*Bene.* And how do you?

*Beat.* Verie ill too.

*Bene.* Serue God, loue me, and mend, there wil I leaue you too, for here comes one in haste.

*Enter Vrsula.*

*Vrsula* Madam, you must come to your vncke, yonders old coile at home, it is prooued my Lady Hero hath bin falsely accusde, the Prince and Claudio mightily abusde, and Don Iohn is the author of all, who is fled and gone: will you come presently?

*Beat.* Will you go heare this newes signior?

*Bene.* I wil liue in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy cies: and moreouer, I wil go with thee to thy vnckes. *exit.*

I 2

*Enter*

V.iii.

*Much adoe**Enter Claudio, Prince, and three or foure with tapers.**Claudio* Is this the monument of Leonato?*Lord* It is my Lord. *Epitaph.*

Done to death by flauderous tongues,

Was the Hero that heere lies:

Death in guerdon of her wronges,

Giues her fame which neuer dies:

So the life that dyed with shame,

Liues in death with glorious fame.

Hang thou there vpon the toomb,

Praising hir when I am dead.

*Claudio* Now musick sound & sing your solemne hymne.*Song* Pardon goddesse of the night,

Those that slew thy virgin knight,

For the which with songs of woe,

Round about her tombe they goe:

Midnight asslist our mone, help vs to sigh &amp; grone.

Heauily heauily.

Graues yawne and yeeld your dead,

Till death be vttered,

Heauily heauily.

*(right.**L.* Now vnto thy bones good night, yeerely will I do this*Prince* Good morrow maisters, put your torches out,

The wolues haue pried, and looke the gentle day

Before the wheelles of Phœbus, round about

Dapples the drowsie East with spots of grey:

Thanks to you al, and leaue vs, fare you well.

*Claudio* Good morrow maisters, each his seuerall way.*Prince* Come let vs hence, and put on other weedes,

And then to Leonatoes we will goe.

*Claudio* And Hymen now with luckier issue speeds,Then this for whom we rendred vp this woe. *exeunt.*

V.ii.

*Enter Leonato, Benedick, Margaret Ursula, old man, Frier, Hero.**Frier* Did I not tell you shee was innocent?*Leo.* So are the Prince and Claudio who accusd her,

Vpon the errour that you heard debated:

But Margaret was in some fault for this,

Although against her will as it appears,

In

*about Nothing.*

V. iv.

In the true course of all the question.

*Old* Wel, I am glad that all things sorts so well.

*Bened.* And so am I, being else by faith enforst  
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

*Leo.* Well daughter, and you gentlewomen all,  
Withdraw into a chamber by your selues,  
And when I send for you come hither masked:  
The Prince and Claudio promise by this howre  
To visite me, you know your office brother,  
You must be father to your brothers daughter,  
And giue her to young Claudio.

*Exeunt Ladies.*

*Old* Which I will doe with confirmd countenance.

*Bened.* Frier, I must intreate your paines, I thinke.

*Frier* To doe what Signior?

*Bened.* To bind me, or vndo me, one of them:

Signior Leonato, truth it is good Signior,  
Your niece regards me with an eye of fauour.

*Leo.* That eye my daughter lent her, tis most true.

*Bened.* And I do with an eye of loue requite her.

*Leo.* The sight whereof I thinke you had from me,  
From Claudio and the Prince, but whats your will?

*Bened.* Your answere sir is enigmaticall,  
But for my wil, my will is, your good will  
May stand with ours, this day to be conioynd,  
In the state of honorable marriage,  
In which (good Frier) I shal desire your help.

*Leo.* My heart is with your liking.

*Frier* And my helpe.

Heere comes the Prince and Claudio.

*Enter Prince, and Claudio, and two or three other.*

*Prince* Good morrow to this faire assembly.

*Leo.* Good morrow Prince, good morrow Claudio:  
We heere attend you, are you yet determined,  
To day to marry with my brothers daughter?

*Claud.* Ile hold my mind were she an Ethiopie.

*Leo* Call her forth brother, heres the Frier ready.

*P.* Good morrow Bened, why whats the matter?

*Much adoe*

That you haue such a Februarie face,  
So full of frost, of storme, and clowdinesse.

*Claud.* I thinke he thinkes vpon the sauage bull:  
44 Tush feare not man, weele tip thy hornes with gold,  
And all Europa shall reioyce at thee,  
As once Europa did at lustie loue,  
When he would play the noble beast in loue.

48 *Bene.* Bull loue sir had an amiable lowe,  
And some such strange bull leapt your fathers cowe,  
† And got a calfe in that same noble feate,  
Much like to you, for you haue iust his bleate.

*Enter brother, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula.*

52 *Claud.* For this I owe you: here comes other recknings.  
Which is the Lady I must seize vpon?

*Leo.* This same is she, and I do giue you her.

*Claud.* Why then shees mine, sweet, let me see your face.

56 *Leon.* No that you shall not till you take her hand,  
Before this Frier, and sweare to marry hir.

*Claud.* Giue me your hand before this holy Frier,  
I am your husband if you like of me.

60 *Hero* And when I liu'd I was your other wife,  
And when you loued, you were my other husband.

*Claud.* Another Hero.

† *Hero* Nothing certainer,  
One Hero died defilde, but I do liue,  
64 And surely as I liue, I am a maide.

*Prince* The former Hero, Hero that is dead.

*Leon.* She died my Lord, but whiles her slaunder liu'd.

68 *Frier* All this amazement can I qualifie,  
When after that the holy rites are ended,  
Ile tell you largely of faire Heroes death,  
Meane time let wonder seeme familiar,  
And to the chappell let vs presently,

72 *Ben.* Soft and faire Frier, which is Beatrice?

*Beat.* I answer to that name, what is your will?

*Bene.* Do not you loue me?

*Beat.* Why no, no more then reason.



*about Nothing.*

Viv.

*Bene.* Why then your vncke, and the prince, and Claudio.  
Haue beene deceiu'd, they swore you did.

*Beat.* Do not you loue me?

*Bene.* Troth no, no more then reason.

*Beat.* Why then my cosin Margaret and Vrsula  
Are much deceiu'd, for they did sweare you did.

*Bene.* They swore that you were almost sieke for me.

*Beat.* They swore that you were welnigh dead for me.

*Bene.* Tis no such matter, then you do not loue me.

*Beat.* No truly, but in friendly recompence.

*Leon.* Come cosin, I am sure you loue the gentleman.

*Cla.* And ile besworne vpon't, that he loues her,  
For heres a paper written in his hand,  
A halting sonnet of his owne pure braine,  
Fashioned to Beatrice.

*Hero* And heres another,  
Writ in my cosins hand, stolne from her pocket,  
Containing her affection vnto Benedicke.

*Bene.* A miracle, heres our owne hands against our hearts:  
come, I will haue thee, but by this light I take thee for pittie.

*Beat.* I would not denie you, but by this good day, I yeeld  
vpon great perswasion, and partly to saue your life, for I was  
told, you were in a consumption.

*Leon.* Peace I will stop your mouth,

*Prince* How dost thou Benedicke the married man?

*Bene.* Ile tel thee what prince: a colledge of witte-crackers  
cannot flout me out of my humour, dost thou think I care for  
a Satyre or an Epigramme? no, if a man will be beaten with  
braines, a shall weare nothing handsome about him: in briefe,  
since I doe purpose to marrie, I will think nothing to anie pur-  
pose that the world can saie against it, and therefore neuer flout  
at me, for what I haue said against it: for man is a giddie thing,  
and this is my conclusion: for thy part Claudio, I did thinke  
to haue beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my kinsman,  
liue vnbruis'de, and loue my cousen.

*Cla.* I had wel hope thou wouldst haue denied Beatrice,  
that I might haue cudgell'd thee out of thy single life, to make  
thee

V.IV.

*Much ado*

thee a double dealer, which out of question thou wilt be, if my  
coosin do not looke exceeding narrowly to thee.

120 *Bene.* Come, come, we are friends, lets haue a dance ere we  
are maried, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wiuues  
heelcs.

*Leon.* Weele haue dancing afterward.

124 *Bene.* First, of my worde, therefore plaie musicke, Prince,  
thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife, there is no staffe  
more reuerent then one tipt with horne.

*Enter Messenger.*

128 *Mess.* My Lord, your brother Iohn is tane in flight,  
And brought with armed men backe to Messina.

*Bene.* Thinke not on him till to morrow, ilc deuise thee  
braue punishments for him: strike vp Pipers. *dance.*

F I N I S.













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